

Brazilian Congress Tables Two Bills Decriminalizing Abortion

Contributed by Matthew Cullinan Hoffman
Saturday, 26 July 2008

Two bills to decriminalize abortion in Brazil were defeated for the third time in recent weeks, in what may be the final blow to legislation that has been under consideration for over 17 years in the Brazilian National Congress.

The latest defeat was dealt by the Constitution, Justice, and Citizenship Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, Brazil's lower legislative house, in a crushing 30-4 vote, after the head of the committee, Eduardo Cunha, rejected the legislation on June 26.

"The right to life constitutes the supreme value of the Constitution, because all other rights are derived from it," said Cunha at the time, noting that the right to life cannot be abolished even by a constitutional amendment.

The ensuing debate in the Committee provoked an impassioned response on the part of pro-life deputies, who constituted the overwhelming majority.

Deputy Carlos William brought a baby coffin and two dolls to illustrate his position, and cited verses from the Bible. Deputies Miguel Martini and Luiz Bassuma brought poster-sized photos of unborn children killed by abortion.

After a brief period of discussion, the committee voted for a motion to close debate and hold the vote, angering pro-abortion forces, who protested outside the building.

According to the newspaper *Jornal do Comércio*, the bill will be permanently archived without a special vote to bring it to the full floor. "This bill won't prosper in the chamber," Cunha was quoted as saying.

The decision follows an earlier rejection by the Social Security and Family Committee, which nixed the legislation on May 7. The vote was 33-0 after the small, pro-abortion minority left in protest.

The Brazilian Chamber of Deputies' firm pro-life stance is reflected by the majority of Brazilians, who, according to polls, are more opposed than ever to decriminalizing abortion.

After a year in which the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops launched a nationwide pro-life campaign, Brazilians opposed to decriminalizing abortion rose from 63% to 68%.

A recent online poll held by the liberal newspaper O Globo also resulted in a clear majority against the decriminalization bills. Pro-life readers sounded off against the legislation in statements published by the newspaper on its website.

Expressing disbelief at the idea, advanced by pro-abortion groups, that decriminalization will reduce the number of abortions, one reader wrote: "Think before speaking! A woman can decide what to do with her body, yes! She just can't interfere with another life in the process. Freeing the practice to reduce it? That's nonsense! Prohibit and prosecute to diminish it. Fulfill the law!"

Another wrote: "Abortion is a weak attitude that denotes irresponsibility. It is to flee the consequences of one's actions. And, for the other cases, there is legal support for the issue. It is inconceivable to accept abortion as a way of making up for mistakes."

Abortion is currently decriminalized in Brazil in cases of rape and to save the mother's life.

This article appeared originally in LifeSiteNews - www.LifeSiteNews.com.