

# Will Spain Abolish Abortion?

*A proposed new law will help end abortion-on-demand*

Steven Mosher and Carlos Beltramo / January 13, 2014

Even before Spain's Socialist government declared abortion a women's "right" in 2010, Spain had become known as the abortion capital of Europe. Although abortions are supposedly allowed only up to 14 weeks, this limitation is widely ignored, and women travel there from all over the continent for gruesome, late-term abortions. The former Prime Minister, Socialist Rodriguez Zapatero, in fact, did all he could to promote abortion under all circumstances. But those days may be coming to an end.

The Popular Party government of Mariano Rajoy has now proposed, and his Cabinet has approved, a new law that will allow women to terminate pregnancies only in the case of rape or grave risk to their physical or psychological health. This legislation, if passed, would mark a return to the kind of abortion restrictions that are included in the 1985 law.

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—Ignacio Arsuaga, President of Hazteoir.org

We applaud the conservative Popular Party for its efforts to honor its campaign

promise to repeal the earlier law. But at the same time, we also want to point out that, without the efforts of Hazteoir.org, Foro Español de la Familia, and other Spanish pro-life groups, nothing would have happened. Two years have passed since Rajoy took power. Politicians, no less than political parties, only act when they are pressured to do so.

Ignacio Arsuaga, President of Hazteoir.org, kept up the pressure on the Popular Party to honor its commitment to pro-life voters as the months went by. Arsuaga told PRI, "This is not the law we wanted [outlawing all abortions]. But it is still a historic victory. This law marks the first time that the abortion movement in Spain has been forced to retreat. It sends a clear message that you can advance the cause of life and it proves that is not true, as some have said, that you can not change the abortion laws in Spain."

The chief differences between the 2010 law and the one currently being considered are:

- The 2010 law declared abortion to be a "right." The new law views abortion as a crime, but decriminalizes it in cases of (1) rape and (2) if the pregnancy seriously endangers the life or the mental or physical health of a woman.
- In 2010 law declared that a woman could abort her unborn baby for any reason during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Now abortion will only be allowed during the first 12 weeks in cases of rape, and only if the woman has reported the crime to the police.
- The 2010 law also permits abortion up to 22 weeks if the pregnancy poses a serious threat to the life or health of the mother. The new law says the same, but imposes the additional requirement that two doctors not working for the clinic in which the abortion would be performed certify its necessity.
- In 2010 law allowed adolescents 16 years of age or older to abort without parental consent. The new law requires parental consent for any child under the age of 18.
- In 2010 law made no provision for a physician to object on grounds of conscience. The new law will create regulations allowing doctors to conscientiously object to any practice they find morally objectionable.

The new bill must still pass the parliament, and is being heavily criticized by the now out-of-

power Socialists. Still, since the Popular Party enjoys an absolute majority in the Congress, final passage should not prove much of an obstacle. Spain will then become the first country in the 28-member EU to reverse, as least in part, the legalization of abortion.

The prospect of this historic defeat has the Left is racheting up its rhetoric. It is claiming that restricting abortion in any way amounts to a “war on women.” Sound familiar, anyone? Even so, pro-life groups have managed to sieze the rhetorical high ground. The bill itself is called “A Comprehensive Law for the Protection of the Rights of Women who have Conceived and are Pregnant.” Women, too, are victims of abortion, they convincingly argue.

Passage of the new law will not end the struggle to defend the unborn. Hazteoir.org, el Foro Español de la Familia and other pro-life groups must first be vigilant to ensure that the provision allowing abortion when the mental health of the mother is at stake not be abused. It is well known in Spain that hundreds of thousands of undercover abortions took place in Spain between 1985 and 2010 on these grounds.

Other problems exist as well. The government—which means ordinary Spaniards—will continue to have to pay for abortions that pass legal muster. Better prenatal health care and simplified adoption laws will also be necessary. If the law is not effectively implemented, “legal protection of the unborn” will remain only a slogan.

The new law represents, for Ignacio Arsuaga and other pro-lifers, a starting point, rather than an end point. They will continue working towards the complete abolition of abortion in Spain. Pace Arsuaga, “We will keep fighting until we reach our “abortion zero” goal.”

Viva España!

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