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Michigan senators should support abortion survivors

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Last Tuesday the U.S. Senate voted on two bills that would have protected some of the nation's most vulnerable children: babies in the womb more than halfway through pregnancy, who are capable of feeling pain, and babies who survive abortions and are born alive. Both bills received bipartisan support from a majority of senators and came within a handful of the 60 votes needed to advance to final passage.

Missing from the list of bipartisan senators who voted in favor of these bills are Michigan Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters. They voted against advancing both these measures, despite polling strong support by pro-life and pro-choice Americans alike.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act — backed by a bipartisan majority of 56 senators — would ensure that babies who survive failed abortions receive the same medical care as any

other baby born prematurely at the same age. The vast majority of Americans support this humane legislation, 75% of Independents and 70% of Democrats included. But abortion advocates in states like New York and Virginia have pushed to expand abortion through the moment of birth and even strip away what modest laws existed to protect these helpless infants, leaving them especially vulnerable to being killed outside the womb or abandoned to die.

A few Democratic senators on Tuesday argued that abortion survivors are a myth and this was simply political theater.

They're wrong.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), between 2003 and 2014 143 babies died after being born alive during failed abortions, with no indication whether they received care or not. Melissa Ohden, Gianna Jessen, Claire Culwell and other adult survivors of abortion know exactly what it's like to



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U.S. Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters voted against two bills that would prohibit late-term abortions and protect abortion survivors, the authors write.

be entirely at the mercy of doctors and nurses who, just moments earlier, tried to end their lives.

The reason so many babies have survived abortions is that the United States is one of only seven nations in the world that allow abortion on demand throughout pregnancy — a group that includes China and North Korea.

A strong, diverse majority of Americans wants us out of that club. The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act — backed by a bipartisan majority of 54 senators — would stop late-term abortions after five months, a point when science shows unborn children can feel excruciating pain. Nicknamed "Micah's Law" in honor of Micah Pickering, who was born at just 22 weeks and is now thriving at seven years old, this bill would save the lives of more than 11,000 babies a year.

President Trump has made it clear he is on their side, pledging to sign both bills if only Congress will send them to his desk. In a statement of support, his administration said, "Our most helpless Americans cannot protect themselves from pain or from those who would

callously allow them to die. The government, therefore, has a compelling responsibility to defend the rights and interests of these babies, including to be free from excruciating or unnecessary pain.

All babies have the same dignity. They should not have to endure pain, and they should receive critical life-saving care regardless of whether they are born in a hospital, at home, or in an abortion clinic."

Regardless of whether you are pro-life or pro-choice, Republican or Democrat, it should offend the conscience of every Michigan resident that its two U.S. senators cannot lend their support to stopping painful late-term abortions or even ensuring that children born alive after failed abortions receive adequate medical care.

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