

15-Week Abortion Ban: A Pro-Life Perspective on the Unintended Consequences

[/ Fighting for Life, Legislation](#) / By [Life Legal](#) / September 20, 2023



A proposal for a federal 15-week ban on abortion is being floated as a way to create political consensus over a divisive issue. It was raised during the Republican presidential debate and, unfortunately, has become somewhat of a measure of one's commitment to the pro-life position.

While we are grateful for all restrictions on the killing of innocent children, a 15-week federal ban poses critical problems, including the following:

1. Pro-life states have enacted abortion restrictions much more stringent – and effective – than stopping abortion at 15 weeks. The passage of a federal 15-week ban will put tremendous pressure on those states to water down their existing life-saving measures in favor of a *de facto* “consensus” position.
2. [Over 95% of abortions](#) are performed before 15 weeks. Again, we support any effort to save lives, but a 15-week ban is not the silver bullet to ending abortion it is touted as. The overwhelming majority of abortions in this country would still be completely legal under a 15-week ban.
3. While polling shows that many people would support a 15-week ban, our job is not to placate those who believe the debate over abortion can be put to rest by enacting a law that allows the nearly unhindered killing of innocent children.
4. This is not the right time to return abortion to the federal government. We are currently fighting off efforts to re-federalize abortion through deadly bills like the Women's Health Protection Act, which would create a federal right to abortion throughout pregnancy. Floating a 15-week ban only fuels the zeal of pro-aborts to codify *Roe*.
5. By promoting a federal 15-week abortion ban, the pro-life movement is forcing candidates to commit to the position that Congress has the constitutional authority to regulate abortion at the state level. Many truly

pro-life candidates sincerely believe that the Constitution does not give Congress that power. Branding these principled limited-government conservatives as insufficiently pro-life is divisive and harms the movement.

6. Focusing on a 15-week ban that would stop only a small fraction of abortions takes attention away from other steps the federal government could take to curtail abortions, such as disrupting the interstate flow of the abortion drugs that are now used in more than 50% of abortions.
7. By the time a baby in the womb reaches 15 weeks, he or she is 4 to 6 ½ inches long. The baby's arms and legs are formed and moving, the organs are in place, and the heart has been beating for over two months. Babies at 15 weeks and earlier can possibly [feel pain](#). Human life should be protected from conception on, but even in states where we can only achieve incremental abortion restrictions, 15 weeks is too far.

For these reasons, we believe support for a federal 15-week abortion ban should not be a litmus test for pro-life candidates – or anyone else for that matter.

Legal, L. (2023, October 17). *15-Week abortion ban: A Pro-Life perspective on the unintended consequences*. LIFE LEGAL DEFENSE FOUNDATION.

<https://lifelegaldefensefoundation.org/15-week-abortion-ban-not-a-good-idea/>