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Dear Representative,

This correspondence may be the most critical argument I have ever made to lawmakers. Although some may struggle with what is written, I hope these words will ease any discomfort about supporting legislation prohibiting abortions after the first trimester.

For many of us, abortion is a grave moral evil that violates the fundamental dignity of human life, and the proposed legislation is much weaker than we had hoped for. Nevertheless, it's where we are today.

The current circumstances reveal a divide among pro-lifers that is not always well defined or discerned. Among pro-lifers, there are two groups: *incrementalists* and *immediatists*.

Incrementalism is the view that contends our ultimate goal is the complete abolition of abortion. Still, we also want to support measures that curtail abortions and save as many lives as possible. Immediatists, however, reject incrementalism because they argue it surrenders the principle of the sanctity of every human life, and to do so is sinful at worst and defeatist at the least. They insist that we have to protect every life, not just some.

I genuinely appreciate the admirable and purist stand of my immediatist pro-life brothers and sisters. But I'm afraid I have to disagree with them.

My good friend, Dr. Richard Land, former president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and president of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, provides an excellent illustration of what's flawed about the immediatist's approach. He writes:

"That approach would be a little bit like Eisenhower setting the goal to capture Berlin but refusing to invade Normandy until all of France

and Germany could be conquered at once. That would have been foolish. Of course, the goal is the total conquest of the Nazis in Berlin, but that goal can only be reached incrementally. You have to land the troops in Normandy and fight your way through. Sitting on the beach in England and declaring 'your total conquest' principles would never have driven the Nazis out of France. You have to fight inch by inch, yard by yard, mile by mile, until total victory is achieved.

"That is what incrementalism is all about. The ultimate goal is the abolition of abortion. But even if we can't reach that goal today, we are going to take as much ground as we can today and tomorrow and every day until we receive total victory. That is why the pro-life movement supports incremental steps such as abolishing *Roe v. Wade*, enacting partial-birth abortion bans, passing prenatal notification laws...opening crisis pregnancy centers, and other such measures. None of these constitute the complete abolition of abortion, but they do save precious human lives along the way to total abolition."

Joe Carter, a senior writer for *The Gospel Coalition*, also provides a good explanation and defense of incrementalism as opposed to immediatism:

"Almost a decade ago, Justin Taylor interviewed Clarke Forsythe, a pro-life lawyer who serves as the senior counsel for Americans United for Life. Forsythe says the key political virtue for citizens in a democratic republic is prudence, which is 'practical wisdom' or 'right reason about what is to be done.' As an intellectual virtue, Forsythe says, political prudence challenges political leaders and voters with four questions:

Are they pursuing good goals?

Do they exercise wise judgment as to what's possible?

Do they successfully connect means to ends?

Do they preserve the possibility of future progress when the ideal cannot be immediately achieved?

Prudence judges in any particular circumstance whether an incremental strategy is the right one, says Forsythe:

When it is not possible to completely prohibit a social evil, it is both moral and effective to limit it as much as possible. When the ideal is beyond our power, it is moral and effective to seek the greatest good possible. Prudence instructs us that an 'all-or-something' approach is

better than an 'all-or-nothing' approach in politics. One of the reasons is that progress is almost always a result of momentum and momentum—in the face of countervailing obstacles—is often produced by small victories.

An all-or-nothing approach, by contrast, is rarely prudent and rarely produces change, and when nothing is the result, it doesn't create the needed momentum to produce change. This reality is reflected in the simple truth that it's always good to limit an evil.

"... The reality is that we don't have the political power to save all the babies. But we can save some. If we want to pursue the good, exercise wise judgment as to what's possible, successfully connect means to ends, and preserve the possibility of future progress when the ideal cannot be immediately achieved, we should continue to support pro-life incrementalism."

I couldn't agree more, and this is why the Christian Action League urges you to vote for the bill – the only chance you currently have to save lives.

Let me be straight with you, though I do not wish to disparage my pro-life friends who disagree with the incrementalist approach; it's not the immediatists who have anything to show for their efforts; it's the incrementalists who have managed actually to change laws, saving thousands and thousands of lives. The incrementalists who built the momentum with little victories here and there for fifty years got us to the place of overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

This legislation is a historical opportunity in North Carolina to gradually reduce the number of abortions in our state. We cannot afford to waste it.

We must continue working to change hearts and minds on the issue of abortion. Obviously, we still have a lot of work to do in this state. This means engaging in compassionate and respectful dialogue, offering support and practical help to women in crisis pregnancies, and promoting a culture of life. And while this methodology may not provide immediate and complete victory, we must continue to pursue this step-by-step progress toward a society that genuinely values and protects the sanctity of human life. God help us; we will get there!

I did not have the bill's number and title at the writing of this correspondence. Yet, I am sufficiently familiar with its language and trust that you already know by the time you have read this.

I urge you to vote for the abortion bill. The Christian Action League encourages you to support it. Look at it as an incremental approach. It's the right thing to do. Please vote for it.

I earnestly hope this helps if you have any reservations about supporting it. You shouldn't. You can vote for it with a clear conscience.

*If you do nothing in a difficult time, your strength is limited. Rescue those being taken off to death, and save those stumbling toward slaughter. If you say, "But we didn't know about this," won't he who weighs hearts consider it? Won't he who protects your life know? Won't he repay a person according to his work? (Proverbs 24:10-11).*

May God show us his grace.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Creech', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Mark Creech  
Executive Director  
Christian Action League of North Carolina, Inc.