

Mr. Speaker, my comments prepared for now had essentially to do with the point that has been made already here many times. Carving out exceptions to the criminal prohibitions of H.R. 748 for adult siblings, for cousins and uncles would not protect young girls who are made victims of incest by those very adult siblings, cousins or uncles; and it would be a terrible idea to add that to a bill whose primary purpose is to protect the rights of parents and their children.

But I had a chance just to kind of step back here for a moment, Mr. Speaker, and ask myself why the intensity of this debate. I would have to step back and say that respectfully I would submit that maybe it is about the foundational issue here of abortion because if we were not talking about the surgery of abortion, there would be no debate here. No one would say it is not all right to take a young girl across the State line for an appendectomy. That would be an outrageous discussion.

It really is about this whole notion of abortion, and I do not understand the intensity completely, but I believe it has something to do with the conscience in all of us collectively that we are beginning to realize that somehow, as Americans, we are bigger than abortion on demand; that 40 million dead children is enough; and that somehow we need to start asking the real question. The real question is, does abortion take the life of a child? If it does not, it is a nonissue. If it does, then we are in the midst of the greatest human holocaust in the history of humanity.

I think somehow we collectively in our hearts understand that, and therefore, it creates all this acrimony on the finer points; but the real abuse of power is that this body has the power to protect these little babies, and instead, we are debating the finer points in a committee report, and I am ashamed of that.

I pray that somehow we can get to the point where we can come together and not have to look back. The Fugitive Slave Act was a perfect example. We looked back and said how did we let that happen. That was an acrimonious debate, too. There was a little thing called the Civil War over it.

We do not need to proceed down that line. Somehow may compassion and the simple truth prevail here.