

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4501

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 1993

**SANDERS DECRIES SHOOTING OF DOCTOR OUTSIDE ABORTION CLINIC
CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT**

Rep. Bernard Sanders today urged his colleagues in the House to pass the Freedom of Choice Act and stop the atmosphere of violence and intimidation that led to the shooting yesterday of a physician outside an abortion clinic.

"Mr Speaker, 12 years of relentless assault by the Reagan and Bush Administrations on the rights of women to control their own bodies has engendered a climate of intimidation, intolerance and violence. And yesterday we saw the awful manifestation of that climate of hatred," Sanders said.

"When a doctor who performs abortions is gunned down in broad daylight, it is time for Congress to act. When women seeking abortions, and doctors working in abortion clinics must fear for their lives, something is terribly wrong. This Congress must pass the Freedom of Choice Act which makes it clear, from one end of America to the other, that the right of choice with regard to abortion is a right of privacy, a constitutional right."

Sanders noted that fewer and fewer medical schools are training doctors to perform abortions and that abortions are no longer available in 85 percent of all counties in the U.S.

According to the National Abortion Federation, which represents 200 clinics, incidents of reported vandalism more than doubled from 1991-1992 and cases of arson rose from four in 1990 to 12 last year. Last month, a clinic in Corpus Christi, Texas was firebombed. In Burlington, abortion protests outside the Women's Health Center have become increasingly threatening.

The Freedom of Choice Act codifies the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision; it prevents individual states from limiting abortion rights. It did not come to the House floor last year due to fear that it would be weakened.

The bill was reintroduced this year and has 114 co-sponsors in the House, including Sanders. It is scheduled to be marked up next week.

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