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**Sanders Opposes Abortion Ban;
Supports Right of Women, Doctors to Choose Safest Surgical Procedure**

U.S. Representative Bernie Sanders, I-VT, today voted against HR 1122, a bill to ban a specific medical abortion procedure, referred to as intact D&E or D&X. "I appreciate and respect the very strong views Vermonters hold on both sides of the abortion debate," he said. "I have always believed it is wrong for the federal government to interfere in the very personal decision a woman must make regarding whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."

The bill passed the House of Representatives by 295 to 136. It is identical to legislation which Sanders opposed and the President vetoed last year.

Sanders said that it is wrong for the federal government to deny options to women and their physicians. "The decision to have an abortion is never an easy one for any woman. Each woman's situation is unique, and each woman must consider different and complex factors - particularly in terms of her own medical situation. It is not the government's place to deny a physician and his or her patient options that will protect that patient's health."

Sanders quoted the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which said in a January 12 Statement of Policy, "An intact D&X ... may be the best or most appropriate procedure in a particular circumstance to save the life or preserve the health of a woman, and only the doctor, in consultation with the patient, based upon the woman's particular circumstances can make this decision. The potential exists that legislation prohibiting specific medical practices, such as intact D&X, may outlaw techniques that are critical to the lives and health of American women. **The intervention of legislative bodies into medical decision making is inappropriate, ill advised, and dangerous.**"

Sanders concluded that "The Supreme Court has ruled that states cannot ban abortions that are necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother. But this bill would prevent doctors from doing all they can to promote and protect the health and safety of their patients."

In opposing HR 1122, Sanders is joined by numerous medical and women's organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Public Health Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Medical Women's Association, the Society of Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health, the National Organization for Women, and Planned Parenthood. The Vermont Legislature recently defeated by 104 to 33 an attempt to deny funding for this surgical procedure to Vermont Medicaid recipients.