

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

A N A C T

RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- FETAL PROTECTION ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Edwards, Azzinaro, Corvese, Cunha, and Coughlin

Date Introduced: February 09, 2017

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 11 of the General Laws entitled "CRIMINAL OFFENSES" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 54.1

4 FETAL PROTECTION ACT

5 **11-54.1-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Fetal Protection Act."

7 **11-54.1-2. Definitions.**

8 For purposes of this chapter:

9 (1) "Another" means the unborn child or any human being other than the actor;

10 (2) "Unborn child" means the unborn offspring of a human being conceived, but not yet  
11 completely born;

12 (3) "Whoever" does not include the pregnant woman whose unborn child is killed or  
13 injured;

14 (4) "Without lawful justification" means acting under circumstances in which the use of  
15 lethal force is not legally justified.

16 **11-54.1-3. Murder of an unborn child.**

17 (a) Whoever, without lawful justification, causes the death of an unborn child is guilty of  
18 murder of an unborn child if they:

19 (1) Intend to cause the death of or do great bodily harm to another or knows that their act

1 will cause the death or do great bodily harm to another;

2 (2) Know that their act creates a strong probability of death or great bodily harm to  
3 another;

4 (3) Attempt or commit a forcible felony; or

5 (4) Perpetrate an act eminently dangerous to another and evince a depraved mind, without  
6 regard for human or fetal life.

7 (b) "Forcible felony" means any felonious act that involves a high risk of violence.

8 (c) Penalty. The sentence for murder of an unborn child shall be equal to that for murder  
9 pursuant to §11-23-2. The death penalty shall not be imposed.

10 **11-54.1-4. Voluntary manslaughter of an unborn child.**

11 (a) Whoever, without lawful justification, causes the death of an unborn child is guilty of  
12 voluntary manslaughter of an unborn child if they:

13 (1) Intend to cause the death of another in an immediate response provoked by such  
14 words or acts of another as would provoke a person of ordinary self-control under like  
15 circumstances;

16 (2) Commit or attempt to commit a misdemeanor offense with such force or violence that  
17 the death of or great bodily harm to another was reasonably foreseeable; or

18 (3) Intend to cause the death of an unborn child because the actor is coerced by threats  
19 made by someone other than their co-conspirator and which cause the actor to reasonably believe  
20 that their act is the only means of preventing imminent death to the actor or another.

21 (b) Penalty. Voluntary manslaughter of an unborn child is a felony.

22 **11-54.1-5. Involuntary manslaughter of an unborn child.**

23 (a) Whoever, without lawful justification, causes the death of an unborn child is guilty of  
24 involuntary manslaughter of an unborn child if they:

25 (1) Create an unreasonable risk by their culpable negligence and consciously take a  
26 chance of causing death or great bodily harm to another;

27 (2) Shoot the mother of the unborn child with a firearm or other dangerous weapon as a  
28 result of negligently believing her to be an animal;

29 (3) Set a spring gun, pit fall, deadfall, snare, or other like dangerous weapon or device; or

30 (4) Negligently permit any animal known by the actor to have vicious propensities or to  
31 have caused great or substantial bodily harm in the past, to run uncontrolled off the owner's  
32 premises, or negligently fail to keep that animal properly confined.

33 (b) Penalty. Involuntary manslaughter of an unborn child is a felony.

34 **11-54.1-6. Battery of an unborn child.**

1 (a) Whoever, without legal justification, inflicts great or substantial bodily harm upon an  
2 unborn child, who is subsequently born alive, by intentionally or knowingly touching a pregnant  
3 woman without her consent is guilty of battery of an unborn child.

4 (b) Penalty. Battery of an unborn child resulting in great bodily harm to the unborn child  
5 is a felony. Battery of an unborn child resulting in substantial bodily harm to the unborn child is a  
6 misdemeanor.

7 (c) As used in this section, "great bodily harm" includes, but is not limited to, permanent  
8 disability or disfigurement.

9 (d) As used in this section, "substantial bodily harm" includes, but is not limited to, the  
10 birth of the unborn child prior to thirty-seven (37) weeks' gestation if the child weighs two  
11 thousand five hundred grams (2,500 g) or less at the time of birth.

12 (e) "Substantial bodily harm" does not include the inducement of the unborn child's birth  
13 when done for bona fide medical purposes.

14 **11-54.1-7. Assault of an unborn child.**

15 (a) Whoever, without legal justification, does any of the following commits assault of an  
16 unborn child:

17 (1) Commits any act with the intent to cause fear in a pregnant woman of immediate  
18 bodily harm to herself or with the intent to cause fear in a pregnant woman of the death of her  
19 unborn child; or

20 (2) Intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict bodily harm on an unborn child who is  
21 subsequently born alive.

22 (b) Penalty. Assault of an unborn child is a misdemeanor.

23 **11-54.1-8. Exceptions.**

24 This chapter does not apply to:

25 (1) Acts which cause the death of an unborn child if those acts were committed during a  
26 legal abortion to which the pregnant woman consented; and

27 (2) Acts which are committed pursuant to usual and customary standards of medical  
28 practice during diagnostic testing or therapeutic treatment.

29 **11-54.1-9. Other convictions not barred.**

30 A prosecution for or conviction under this chapter is not a bar to conviction of or  
31 punishment for any other crime committed by the defendant as part of the same conduct.

32 **11-54.1-10. Severability.**

33 If any provision, word, phrase, or clause of this chapter or the application thereof to any  
34 person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the provisions, words,

1 phrases, clauses, or applications of this part which can be given effect without the invalid  
2 provision, word, phrase, clause, or application and to this end, the provisions, words, phrases, and  
3 clauses are declared to be severable.

4 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- FETAL PROTECTION ACT

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1           This act would establish the Fetal Protection Act, establishing certain actions to unborn  
2 children as crimes.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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