



Campaign 2008

# Media Reality ✓ Check

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Press Contact:  
Colleen O'Boyle  
(703) 683-5004  
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Not News? In Illinois, Obama Voted Against Protecting Born Babies; Later Smeared Pro-Lifers as "Liars"

## Media Silence on Abortion Aids Radical Obama

Two of the three presidential debates have now passed without either candidate being asked about abortion, an issue that nearly four out of ten voters said was "very important" to them, according to an August Pew survey. What makes the abortion issue especially salient this campaign year is Barack Obama's extremely liberal record — which may also explain why the big broadcast networks have practically avoided the subject.

TV reporters barely mentioned Obama's pro-abortion stance during the primaries — from the launch of his candidacy in January 2007 through the end of the primaries in June 2008, just six out of 1,289 network evening news stories about Obama (0.46%) mentioned his position on abortion; none discussed it in any detail. It was thus unusual when ABC's Terry Moran pointed out, in a February 25, 2008 story on *World News*, that Obama was "considered a reliable liberal Democratic vote in Illinois... opposing efforts to ban so-called 'partial birth abortions.'"

Obama's stance protecting partial birth abortions puts him to the left of many liberal Democrats — 17 out of 47 Democratic Senators, including Obama's running-mate Joe Biden, voted to outlaw such abortions in 2003, a position backed by 75% of the public, according to a 2007 Pew survey. But besides the Moran story, only two other network evening news stories mentioned Obama's support for the procedure, including an April 21, 2007 *CBS Evening News* story briefly noting Obama's condemnation of the Supreme Court for upholding the federal law banning such abortions.

But Obama's most extreme pro-abortion move came in Illinois, when he voted against a bill to protect babies born alive following unsuccessful abortions, the Born Alive Infant Protection Act. A similar bill was brought before the U.S. Congress, bolstered by the testimony of a Chicago-area nurse named Jill Stanek, who described how a baby who survived an "induced labor abortion" was abandoned by the hospital staff. Stanek testified: "I could not bear the thought

of this suffering child dying alone in a soiled utility room, so I cradled and rocked him for the 45 minutes that he lived. He was 21 to 22 weeks old, weighed about half a pound, and was about 10 inches long." In 2002, the federal law protecting born-alive babies passed on a voice vote without objection from any Democrat, including strong liberals such as Hillary Clinton and Barbara Boxer.

**Barack Obama's most extreme pro-abortion move was voting against a bill to protect babies born during unsuccessful abortions, something no Democrat opposed at the federal level. None of the networks have even mentioned this radical aspect of Obama's record.**

But in Illinois, Obama helped kill a similar bill when it came before the Health and Human Services committee he chaired. Challenged about his vote this summer, Obama lashed out at pro-lifers, claiming the state bill he opposed lacked a "neutrality clause" protecting the status quo on abortion, something liberals demanded and received before agreeing to the federal law.

"I hate to say that people are lying, but here's a situation where folks are lying. I have said repeatedly that I would have been completely, fully in support of the federal bill," Obama told CBN on August 16. "That was not the bill that was presented at the state level."

Four days later, the *Chicago Tribune* documented how Obama and his committee voted 10-to-zero to add the required "neutrality clause" to Illinois Senate Bill 1082 — and then Obama and five other state senators voted to kill the bill later that same day. A CNN "fact check" on that day's *Situation Room* refused to conclude that Obama had unfairly attacked his critics as liars. "Looking at the bills, the language is similar, but the Obama camp says...there were concerns about undermining Illinois abortion law," reporter Mary Snow delicately suggested.

As for the broadcast networks, none have yet mentioned this radical aspect of Obama's record. That silence helps the Democrat cast himself as more centrist than he really is, but shows how hopeless the media's "watchdogs" are when it comes to their liberal friends.

— Rich Noyes and Matthew Balan

To schedule an interview with an MRC spokesman, please contact Colleen O'Boyle at (703) 683-5004