Jenkins urged to let abortion law stand

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Louisiana’s Roman Catholic bishops joined the floor leaders of a new anti-abortion law Wednesday in calling on Rep. Louis "Woody" Jenkins to pull a resolution to push the ban’s rape and incest exceptions. He challenged them to keep their promise by supporting his resolution.

"I want to encourage them now to do just what they’ve committed to do and go ahead and support protecting all the unborn children," Jenkins said.

Passing the resolution would give Louisiana a much better chance of having an abortion ban upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, Jenkins said, "as opposed to what they say ‘we have a compelling interest in protecting the lives of unborn children, but then on the other hand, it’s all right to kill none of those children.’"

While Terrebon said the new law should be given a chance to work, Burton said, "It was not a party to it then (when Jenkins unveiled his resolution stating: Tuesday night) and I am not a party to it now."

"I think we have resolved that issue for this season," Burton said.

Jenkins said the new law in the opinion of many, the strongest now on the books in the country and has the best chance of overriding fear in the legislature. The governor is tired," Terrebon said. "They want to continue to debate on other issues. . . . The legislators have asked us to refrain from further discussion of the issue. Many of the House members have gone to Woody . . . and asked him to consider waiting."

Terrebon said he does not want to place any additional pressure on the issues. "I have no qualms about supporting this bill at any time," Burton said. "There is no problem trying to protect life in the fullest sense of the word, but it would not be the opportune time to do it this year."

Jenkins said "Woody" Jenkins’ resolution is "an effort to what the House and Senate struggled with.

The governor said the Legislature voted for the anti-abortion bill with rape, incest and the life of the mother exceptions, "because they wanted the base behind them," he said lawmakers urged him to allow the legislation to become law saying, "We don’t want to go through this again."

"I would be surprised if it (Jenkins resolution) has any legs to carry it," Roemer said in an impromptu interview in the Capitol hallway.

Roemer said lawmakers who called him into the corridor "Monday were turned off by Jenkins’ idea.

In addition, Burton said Jenkins’ resolution is "not very popular right now."

"I would say it’s likely that it’s not going to do anything," Burton said. "I think Mr. Woody Jenkins has harmonized himself with the legislative process. Everybody was on board with passing the right-life bill with those exceptions, and he comes over there and then takes the benefit away from the celebrations that have worked on it for years and years."

"I just think he did not order himself to the hearts of the legislators at that moment."

While Jenkins said he is concerned about the political fallout, he said he is even more concerned with "saving babies."

And he said, he won’t stop his efforts until the unnecessary killing of the unborn in Louisiana is stopped.

Further, Jenkins said, "it’s just because some lawmakers think his resolution does not stand a chance of being approved does not mean it cannot garner enough votes."

Jenkins said "at every rare" the "pro-life" movement has succeeded against the odds, and this instance is no different.

In New Orleans on Wednesday, Roemer said, the Senate adjourned after the 51st trial after both sides agreed that the law would not go into effect until 60 days after the legislature adjourns, ending speculation that HB112 would take effect immediately.

Attorney General William Guste said any inquiries from law enforcement authorities or the medical community about the effect of the abortion ban."

"There’s no doubt that this case is going to the U.S. Supreme Court," said Kathryn Colbert, state level coordinator for the ACLU’s Reproductive Freedom Project in New York. "Ro. vs. Wade is still the law of the land."

"King" Colbert said. As a result, the new Louisiana law violates high court mandates.

Terrebon’s HB112 prohibits abortion except in cases of rape, incest and to save the life of the mother. It calls for prison terms of up to 10 years and fines of up to $100,000 for doctors who perform illegal abortions.

Attorney General William Guste and ACLU attorney Kathryn Colbert listen to a question Wednesday during a news conference in New Orleans.