U.S. Representative Mike Quigley sets the record straight on the Prenatal Non-Discrimination Act (PRENDA) and called on colleagues to oppose the bill.

"Mister Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the falsely named Prenatal Non-Discrimination Act, or PRENDA. This might be one of the most disingenuous bills to ever to come to the floor of the House.

"The authors of this bill are talking out of both sides of their mouth, so today I want to set the record straight. In one breath the proponents of this bill say they are protecting female fetuses by preventing abortions “based on” sex and that we must pass this bill to protect women everywhere and show that girls are as valued as boys.

"Yet, just last week, these same members obstructed the passage of an expanded Violence Against Women Act that would have protected all victims of violence. The same members who today espouse equality for women voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which will help combat the discrimination against women that keeps them earning 70 cents for every dollar men earn.

"The same members who today talk of protecting female babies, continue to vote to gut the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which will be used to provide life-saving breast and cervical cancer screenings to millions of the very women PRENDA’s proponents claim to care so much about.

"Here’s the truth: this is not about women’s equality. PRENDA is simply another attempt by choice opponents to obstruct women’s access to reproductive health care.

"I agree with the bill's proponents that abortions based on sex are a problem around the world. And I agree that we must take action to stop these abusive practices both at home and around the world. But let me be clear: This bill will not prevent sex-selective abortions, and here's why:

"First, criminalizing such practices simply will not work. Banning sex-selective abortions has already been tried in various countries around the world. And, what expert agencies, such as the World Health Organization which operate in these countries have found is that these bans don't prevent abortions. Rather, they simply result 'in a greater demand for clandestine procedures which fall outside regulations, protocols, and monitoring and basic safety.' These restrictions serve only to drive these procedures underground, making them less safe. Our own history proves this point.

"Second, criminalization of sex-selective abortions would force physicians to question women about their reasons for seeking abortion. It would likely compel physicians to target certain groups of women from cultures where sex-selection abortion is more prevalent. To avoid liability, physicians may even cease providing such care to entire groups of women, simply because of their race. This bill would *promote* racial profiling and discrimination.

"Additionally, targeting such motivations in practice would be nearly impossible. According to an analysis by the World Health Organization and four other UN agencies, 'prosecuting offenders is … practically impossible,' and, further, 'proving that a particular abortion was sex-selective is equally difficult.'

"These expert international organizations do offer a viable solution to address this issue – a solution unmentioned in H.R. 3541. Address the root causes which drive individuals to prefer sons over daughters.

"The United Nations, through its work in nations where sex-selection is prevalent, has stated that the most effective way to address this son preference is by fighting the root economic, social, and cultural causes of sex inequality.

"South Korea successfully lowered its male to female ratio from 116 boys for every 100 girls in

the 90s to 107 boys per100 girls in 2007. They did this by passing laws to improve the legal status of women, and by implementing a public education campaign emphasizing the importance of women.

"So, if we are going to consider this disingenuous bill, let's be honest about it. Its supporters are *not* promoting women's equality. And they are *not* serious about preventing sex-selective abortions. Because if they were, they would be promoting programs to empower women and girls and combat son preference. Instead they are criminalizing physicians, profiling cultural groups, and driving abortion services underground.

"The truth is this bill is another attempt to restrict women's reproductive health care wrapped in the rhetoric of women's rights. Don't be fooled by PRENDA. Vote No."