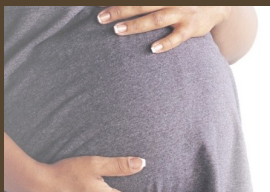


## Too Close to Call



The voting was almost finished, but the outcome was too close to call. On July 15, 2003, the House of Representatives was voting on whether American tax-

payers would subsidize an arm of the United Nations that supported China's gruesome forced abortion program.

It wasn't the highest profile pro-life issue, but for me it had become personal. I had spent part of my childhood in Taiwan, and for decades my family had supported good friends who were missionaries in China. Weeks before the vote, my parents' missionary friends had called to say that a couple who had just become Christians had found out that they had unexpectedly become pregnant with their second child. They considered abortion because keeping the child would mean lost jobs, harassment of their extended families, fines, and this second child would never be official, so she would be excluded from school and health services. But because of their new faith, they knew abortion was not a choice they could make. So they put their trust in God and went on the run. We received updates as they moved from town to town trying to hide the pregnancy.

## Opposition

In 2003, Congressman Chris Smith (R-New Jersey) had proposed an amendment to retain a ban on funding that could go to China's forced abortion program. Congressman Jim Greenwood (R-Pennsylvania), co-chair of the Pro-Choice Caucus, led the opposition to Congressman Smith's pro-life amendment. In the days leading up to the vote in the House of Representatives, each side worked hard to convince as many Congressmen as possible of the merits of their position. On the morning of the vote, we still

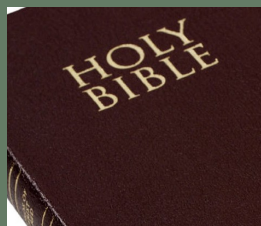


could not tell which side had the upper hand. It could go either way.

The debate on the floor of the House of Representatives was heated. When the debate was over, Congressional leaders unexpectedly decided to debate two other items before voting on Congressman Smith's amendment.

## Pity Party

I don't mind saying that I was in a bad mood at this point. I hadn't eaten for more than 24 hours because of the work leading up to this vote, and this was an issue that seemed so obvious to me — it made me angry that it was even going to be a close call and that we could even lose. And now, because Congress decided to change the schedule, I was stuck on the floor of the House of Representatives for another hour, starving. And to top it all off, my BlackBerry stopped working, so I couldn't even work on e-mail in the meantime. It was time for a pity party.



## God's Word at Work

And then into my mind popped the passage I had read in the Bible that morning. It was about prayer, fasting, and Jesus rescuing a little boy:

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." — Matthew 17:18-21

## Prayer



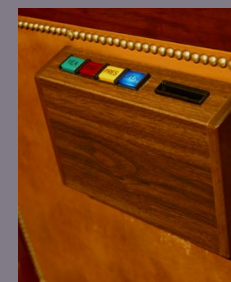
Then it hit me why I was there. I was there to pray. And while the fasting was not something that had been part of my

plan, it was fasting nonetheless. So for almost an hour I sat in a seat in the middle of the Congressional Chamber and just prayed. The one thing I kept praying over and over was for confusion for those who were trying to defeat this pro-life amendment. A feeling of peace like I had rarely felt before rested on me when I finished praying. The vote was about to begin. Congressman Smith came up behind me and asked how I thought the vote would go. Without looking at the sheets of paper in my lap, I told him his amendment had the votes to pass.

Votes in the House of Representatives last for fifteen minutes. During that time, Members of Congress come from their offices across the street and come into the Congressional Chamber to vote. Each Congressman has a personalized card about the size of a credit card that they put into a slot on the back of some of the chairs in the room. They punch a green button for a "yes" vote or a red button for a "no" vote.

## Confusion Granted

Congressman Smith was using every minute to hand out information to each Member of Congress to convince them to vote "yes" on his amendment. Right next to him Congressman Greenwood was handing out information to convince them to vote "no." As the fifteen minutes came to a close, it was still too close to call. Then the last few votes trickled in, and we were ahead 216-211. I looked up and noticed that Congressman Greenwood had not yet voted.



What was he doing? I couldn't understand. At

this point I was pretty exhausted, and the blood sugar deficit was probably not helping me think all that rationally. I had to figure out what was going on, so I walked over and stood a couple of feet behind Congressman Greenwood. As the fifteen minutes for the vote expired, I saw him look up at the screen that shows how everyone has voted. A terrified look crossed his face when he noticed no vote tally next to his name.

He reached into his back pocket for his voting card, pulled it out, and lunged toward the voting machine. The Speaker of the House brought down the gavel with a loud bang — Greenwood was too late. He forgot to vote on the amendment where he led the opposition. He ran toward the center of the Chamber yelling for Congressman Tom DeLay (R-Texas) to reopen the vote so that he could vote on this issue that was so important to him. Congressman DeLay said, “Vote first, lobby later,” and turned around and walked away from Greenwood.

If you look on the Congressional Record page that records the 216-211 win for Congressman Smith’s amendment, right underneath is a sentence that Congressman Greenwood asked to be added to the record. It says:

“On roll call No. 362 I was inadvertently detained and failed to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ‘no.’”

“Inadvertently detained.” In addition, four other Congressmen who would have voted “no” did not vote for some reason. Congressman Smith’s amendment would have lost if everyone who was opposed to his amendment had voted and the final tally was a tie.

Because of that vote, \$25 million that would have gone to an organization that supports China’s forced abortion program instead was used to fight human trafficking.



## Life Protected

On a more personal level, the Chinese couple who was on the run before and after this vote successfully protected their unborn child. After the girl was born, they returned to their town, and just last year we found out that her unapproved status was miraculously overlooked, and she was allowed to be official instead of having to stay “unofficial.” She started first grade this fall.

## God Does Intervene

I don’t pretend to understand God’s ways, but no one can tell me that God does not intervene in important policy matters and in individual lives. He cares deeply about both. And no one can tell me that prayer does not matter. Congressman Greenwood forgot to vote, and that little girl is a happy first grader.

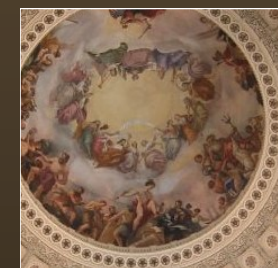
*To find out how you can pray for God to intervene in public policy issues, contact Concerned Women for America.*



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# Would God Intervene in Congress?



*by a congressional staffer*