

Beat: Politics

## **FRENCH PARLIAMENT VOTED FOR ABORTION A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT IN VERSAILLES**

### **PM GABRIEL ATTAL SPEECH FOR MILESTONE**

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**USPA NEWS** - French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal delivered a historic speech during the Versailles Convention for Inclusion of the freedom to vote over voluntary termination of pregnancy in the Constitution, Monday March 4, 2024. Indeed, that day, parliamentarians (Senators and MP's) voted for the "guaranteed freedom" of abortion to be included in article 34, by 780 votes for, 72 against and 50 abstentions.

In total, of the 902 members of parliament present at the Versailles Convention, the 4th of March, 2024, represent 18 more voters than the votes gathered during the votes in the National Assembly on January 30 (545/577 deputies, or 94% participation) and in the Senate on February 28 (339/347, or 98% of participation).

Women are not equal when it comes to the freedom to have complete control over their bodies, depending on the current legislation of the country where they feel. Thus, the use of abortion in countries may be prohibited (as recently in the USA), with a ratio of 37 out of 1,000 while 34 out of 1,000 when the law authorizes it.

### **ONLY 72 VOTES AGAINST AND 50 ABSTENTIONS Vs780 VOTES FOR THE ABORTION FREEDOM BILL**

Opponents are more numerous among the ranks of senators (46) than deputies (26). On the left and among environmentalists, all elected officials voted yes to the inclusion of abortion in the Constitution. The Renaissance deputies also all voted for, with the exception of Annie Vidal, who abstained.

On the right side, the Republican party, led by Eric Ciotti, was divided, with a significant difference between deputies and senators. One LR MP in five voted against (12 votes out of 59 votes), and this proportion of against rises to almost one senator in three (38 votes against out of 132 votes).

The difference is the danger to women's health: clandestine abortions are the third leading cause of maternal mortality worldwide. (Source Amnesty International, Center for Reproductive Rights), with 40% of women of childbearing age in countries where the law prohibits abortion.

Before the vote, ministers and representatives of the different parliamentary groups spoke, including a poignant speech by Senator Claude Malhuret, a former doctor, to defend the right to abortion throughout the world. France becomes one of the rare countries to have included abortion in its Constitution. We publish a large excerpt of the Speech delivered by French Prime Minister, Gabriel Attal, as it was delivered.

As for the far right, from the party of Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardera, the National Rally also had contrasting votes, with 46 votes for (60%), 11 against (14%), and 20 abstentions (26%).

### **IT IS THE 1st & ONLY COUNTRY TO INCLUDE ABORPTION THE FRENCH CONSTITUTION**

It is the first and only country, France, to include voluntary termination of pregnancy (abortion) in the Constitution. It is therefore a historic moment and a progressive guard, in the same heritage of Simone Veil, who had passed the abortion law, in 1975 (January 17, 1975). The text by Simone Veil proposed to authorize abortion within 10 weeks of pregnancy, while leaving the right to any doctor or hospital establishment to refuse to perform abortions. Another great French feminist figure, Gisèle Halimi was the only lawyer to sign, in 1971, the manifesto of 343 women who declared having had an abortion and demanded free access to contraceptive means and free abortion.

The President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron, absent from the Versailles congress, for reasons of separation of executive and legislative powers of the State, and has already invited the French to a "sealing ceremony" and announces a major ceremony on

March 8, at the Elysee, to mark this milestone which he describes as "French pride and universal message for France.

Supported by more than 80% of the French population according to various surveys, the constitutionalization of abortion has gradually established itself in the political landscape.

We are publishing a large part of the speech of Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, accompanied by several ministers, who was present in Versailles in front of parliamentarians, as it was delivered.

**"THE ACT OF PROCREATION IS THE ACT OF FREEDOM PAR EXCELLENCE, DECLARED PM ATTAL AS AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS SPEECH**

"The act of procreation is the act of freedom par excellence. Freedom among all freedoms, the most fundamental, the most intimate of our freedoms. » We are in 1972 in a courtroom in Bobigny, and Gisèle Halimi pronounces these words. It is 1972, and in the dock is the mother of a 16-year-old girl, whose crime is to have helped her daughter to abort after being raped. Gisèle Halimi stands in the face of a male justice system, in the face of a law written by men and defends the freedom of every woman. » Prime Minister Gabriel Attal introduced his speech, facing 902 MP's in the Versailles auditorium.

The Prime Minister then explains, referring to the great feminist lawyer, Gisele Halimi, an activist for abortion in the 1970s: "We are in 1972 and she still feels very alone, Gisele Halimi, in this courtroom, when she pleads for freedom and for the law. Today is March 4, 2024, and Gisele Halimi is no longer alone. A year after the commitment of the President of the Republic, Parliament, and with it the Nation, has sided with him and is preparing, I hope, to include in our Constitution the freedom of every woman to resort to voluntary termination of pregnancy. It's 2024, and Gisele Halimi is no more. But I greet her family, present in this hall of Congress on this historic day.

**"WE HAVE A MORAL DEBT TO WOMEN," PM GABRIEL ATTAL SAID**

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal then addressed the MPs "1972. 2024. It is the long, the road to freedom. And so, as we suggest you borrow it a little more, it is with the greatest humility that I address you. Humility.

Because yes, ladies, and I mean ladies, The man that I am cannot really imagine the distress that these women may have experienced, deprived of the freedom to dispose of their bodies for decades.

The man that I am cannot really imagine the physical suffering of that time, when abortion was synonymous with shameful secrecy, unspeakable pain and fatal risks.

The man that I am cannot really imagine the moral suffering, faced with the weight of a society which preferred to silence and condemn.

But the brother that I am. The son that I am. The friend that I am. The Prime Minister that I am will remember for the rest of his life the pride of having been at this podium on this day.

This day will, I hope, be dedicated to the fight of women and men, from all sides, from all sensibilities, who do honor to the Nation of rights that is France, by having made this moment possible: this day when we will, together, united and full of emotions, change our fundamental law to include the freedom of women. Because we owe a moral debt to all these women...

**"THE ERA OF WORLD HOPE BEGINS, DECLARED PM ATTAL**

This vote is first of all an outcome, that of a long fight.

The first fight was that of the right to vote and citizenship.

thus recalled Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, facing the 902 MP's who voted massively for this law, included in the constitution.

He adds that "The Veil law marks a turning point. It opens the way, finally.

But there were still many battles to be fought.

The PM summarizes the progress of this law, and the will of the government, which in 2022, and with the support of the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron and thanks to the work of parliamentarians from various political sides, the deadline for resorting to abortion is lying down. Some of the obstacles that remained have finally been lifted." He then concluded

"We are in 2024. And thanks to doctors, feminist associations, family planning, conscience raisers, elected officials, parliamentarians, heirs of these past but never finished battles, the march of progress has done its job .

The young Prime Minister Gabriel Attal ends his speech by referring again to Gisele Halimi, to convey a positive message of hope sent from France to the rest of the world. "The era of a finite world begins" concluded Gisele Halimi to her trial of Bobigny. Well I say to everyone, within our borders and beyond, that today, the era of a world of hope begins. ... " Source, Office of the Prime Minister of France, Matignon.

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