

# Congress pro-lifer 'told mistress to have abortion'

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A Republican pro-life congressman is alleged to have put pressure on his mistress to have an abortion.

The claim has emerged from leaked text messages between Tim Murphy, 65, who represents the Pittsburgh suburbs, and Shannon Edwards, 32, his former lover.

"You have zero issue posting your pro-life stance all over the place when you had no issue asking me to abort our unborn child just last week when we thought that was one of the options," she wrote.

Her accusation appeared to be a reference to a message posted on the congressman's Facebook page criticising abortion policy in the United States and declaring his support for the March for Life, an annual pro-life event.

Mr Murphy said that his Facebook posts on abortion had been written by his minions. According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, he wrote to Ms Edwards: "I get what you say about my March for Life messages. I've never written them. Staff does them. I read them and winced. I told staff don't write any more."

Nevertheless, he has been a frequent and vocal critic of abortion and lists himself as part of the House Pro-Life Caucus. He sponsored a bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, which passed the House of Representatives this week. The bill is unlikely to pass the Senate, where a similar measure was thwarted by Democrats in 2015. Nara Pro-Choice America, the women's rights group, said that his support for the law was the "height of hypocrisy".

Mr Murphy admitted to the affair last month. He met Ms Edwards, who is a psychologist, when they worked on a mental health bill that he sponsored. Their affair began in February 2016 and ended at the end of the year. Ms Edwards sent the text message to Mr Murphy in January, fearing that she was pregnant. It proved to be a false alarm.

Mr Murphy, who is married with a daughter and two grandchildren, has yet to comment on the leaks.