

**France: Senate vote on an amendment to prevent Fetal Alcohol (20/10/2004)**  
**PARIS (AFP)**

The Senate has passed the night of Tuesday to Wednesday an amendment to the bill on the rights of the handicapped to a report to inform by an appropriate labeling pregnant women of the dangers of consumption of alcohol.

Presented by the centrist Anne - Marie Payet, elected in Reunion Island, and co-signed by twelve other senators UDF, UMP and unregistered ones, this amendment proposes that **"all units of packaging alcoholic beverages are in the conditions laid down by order of the Minister responsible for health, a sanitary character message advocating the absence of alcohol consumption by pregnant women "**.

While the bill was defended in front of the Senators by the Secretary of State for People with disabilities Marie-Anne Montchamp, the Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy came specially in the hemicycle solemnly to bring a favorable opinion of the government amendment. He has point out that with 3000 cases per year, the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is "the leading cause of non-genetic mental retardation in children."

Ms. Payet argued for her part the need to **" inform pregnant women of the danger that it may represent for the child when they are drinking "** ; "Even moderate consumption is harmful," she insists.

While declaring "a favorable national information campaign to the attention of pregnant women," the senator PS Aude Roland Courteau, worried about the interests of his wine department, refused to rally to the amendment.

Similarly, Gerard Cesar (UMP, Gironde) is ironic about "an amendment that does nothing.", "Should we write on each plate of butter that cholesterol kills", he asked? Yves Détraigne (UDF Marne) fear that it was wrong target, because it is not the duty of the winemaker to do the work that the doctor has not done ".

At the request of the communist group, the amendment has given rise to a public vote: 302 voters, 294 votes cast, 200 votes for, 84 against. © AFP

