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# VAN BUREN COUNTY RIGHT TO LIFE

# NEWSLETTER

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Greetings! This is the first issue of the Van Buren County Right to Life Newsletter. As of now, it is being sent to members, or people who have supplied their email addresses to us. We hope that in future issues we can help inform and educate the pro-life community in Van Buren County of national and state news concerning the life issues, and announce events or special programs. Our annual membership renewal drive will be underway in January. Be looking for your renewal in the mail.

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## Thousands gather in Lansing for the March for Life

On November 8, some 5,000+ pro-lifers rallied in front of the state capitol in Lansing for the first March for Life. The date was chosen because it was the first anniversary of the vote on Proposal 3. The event began with many pro-life leaders encouraging the crowd. One woman spoke about foster care and adoption and another stressed the necessity of supporting pregnancy care centers. Right to Life of Michigan president Barb Listing informed everyone that the organization and 15 other pro-life or pro-family groups had filed a constitutional challenge to Prop 3 in federal court.

Attending the March for Life were about two dozen people representing Van Buren County Right to Life. Pictured in top photo is Jack Bley (in blue), VBCRTL vice-president, and former VBCRTL president Bob Towne. As you can tell from the photo, the weather was cold and wet, but that did not dampen the crowd's enthusiasm. The photo below offers a glimpse of the throng that participated in the "March" portion of the day's events. It was very inspiring to see so many young people at the March. They are the future of the movement.



## Reproductive Health Act passes in Lansing, guts 40 years of Pro-Life laws

It has been said that elections have serious consequences. That was never more true than when Michigan's voters elected pro-abortion majorities in the 2022 mid-term election. Though the majorities were slim (20 to 18 in the Senate, and 56 to 54 in the House), those margins were enough to wreak havoc on the state's pro-life laws. With Governor Gretchen Whitmer acting as principle cheerleader, the radical pro-abortion lawmakers in Lansing were ready to make their move.

The beginning of their drive to purge pro-life laws came in November, 2022, when abortion rights were enshrined in the Michigan Constitution with passage of Proposal 3. However, pro-abortion legislation was "needed" to put teeth to Prop 3. Subsequently, the state's lawmakers repealed our 1846/1931 law that had prohibited abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. Our law, while upheld by the state Supreme Court as legal, was not enforced for 50 years during the *Roe v. Wade* period. Once *Dobbs* overturned *Roe*, our old law should have taken effect again...immediately. However, state court judges stepped in to block it. And the consequences of our law taking effect again in Michigan was the primary motivation for the pro-abortion petition drive that led to Proposal 3.

In September, 2023, pro-abortion lawmakers introduced the Reproductive Health Act (RHA): an 11-bill piece of legislation that would repeal almost all of our pro-life laws enacted since the late-1970s. The bill was stalled in the State

House when one lone Democrat (Karen Whitsett from Detroit) opposed two bills during a crucial committee vote: to eliminate informed consent with the 24-hour waiting period, and repeal our law that banned taxpayer funding for abortions.

Because the Democrats controlled the House by a narrow two-vote majority, the loss of one vote (Whitsett's) would result in a 55 to 55 vote. A tie vote would defeat the bill. During the next few weeks, many House Democrats applied pressure on Whitsett to conform to Democratic party orthodoxy and change her vote. The plan failed. During the House's inaction, the State Senate passed all 11 bills along party lines 20 to 18.

In early November, the House finally voted on the RHA. As expected, nine of the 11 bills passed; the one Democrat voted with pro-lifers on the two bills she originally opposed. The pro-life laws that were repealed include: the partial birth abortion ban, the abortion insurance opt-out law, clinic licensing, moving family planning money away from abortion providers, abortion reporting, abortion complication reporting, and humane disposal of fetal remains.

The one law that was not added to RHA was one to repeal parental consent. Though pro-abortion Democrats want to strike this law as well, they know that the majority of Michigan voters support the common-sense parental consent regulation.

**ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:** Van Buren County RTL will be hosting an Oratory Speech Contest on March 16, 2024. Students are expected to prepare a 5-7 minute essay on one of the following topics: abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, human cloning, or embryonic stem cell research. A panel of judges will determine the winner. The top place finisher will be able to compete in the Right to Life of Michigan State Contest in May as well as give an encore presentation at the Van Buren RTL Focus on Life dinner in October, 2024. For more information call Jack Bley at 269-271-5474 or email him at [ridgeend@aol.com](mailto:ridgeend@aol.com). The contest will be held at New Hope Family Church, 201 W. Michigan Ave, Paw Paw, MI 49079. It will begin at 9:00 am and conclude before noon.

Urgent message from RLM Legislative Director Genevieve Marnon

On November 9, 2023, the last day of session before the legislators went home for a 2-month break, a 4-bill package known euphemistically as the “Death with Dignity Act” was introduced in the Michigan Senate. Senate bills, 678, 679, 680 and 681 will repeal our ban on physician assisted suicide (PAS), allow doctors to prescribe lethal doses of drugs to their terminally ill patients for the purpose of committing suicide, and would turn Michigan into a suicide tourism destination. Allowing physicians to prescribe lethal doses of drugs to their patients is not only fraught with ethical concerns, it is NOT “dignified.”

Michigan has protected the medically frail, vulnerable, and elderly by prohibiting doctors from prescribing assisted suicide drugs since 1998. Unfortunately, 10 other States and D.C. have legalized doctor prescribed death beginning with Oregon in 1997. We must make our voices heard and let our elected officials know that we do not want Michigan to join the ranks of states where our healers are turned into killers.

## **TALKING POINTS**

- PAS places the sick, vulnerable, elderly, and those living with disabilities at risk for coercion, abuse, and denial of care.
- Prescribing lethal drugs to end someone’s life is suicide/euthanasia. It is NOT “Death with Dignity” or “Medical Aid in Dying,” regardless how supporters frame it.
- Opposition includes a wide variety of disability rights groups, patients’ rights advocates, medical societies, hospice and palliative care associations, prolife, and religious organizations.
- In May of 2023, the Michigan State Medical Society again upheld their opposition to physician assisted suicide and euthanasia despite a continued push by supporters to get medical societies to change their position on the subject. November 2023, the American Medical Association also reaffirmed their opposition of physician assisted suicide and rejected redefining “Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD)” as anything other than physician assisted suicide.
- These bills do nothing to improve or advance end of life care, and in fact instead of seeking to eliminate suffering, PAS seeks to eliminate those who suffer.
- Hospice and palliative care should be offered to the terminally ill as a way to walk with the dying instead of abandoning them to self-inflicted death.