

Catholic Conference of Ohio
Executive Director Brian Hickey
100 E. Broad Street, Suite 600
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12/04/2023

Dear Brian Hickey and Michelle Duffey,

As you are aware the sanctity of human life took a crushing blow in Ohio on November 7th. The legal right to slay innocent and defenseless children in the womb, up to the moment of birth, was inoculated into our Ohio Constitution. As a father who helped deliver my three children, the thought of slaughtering them just prior to cutting their umbilical cords is unimaginable, evil and barbaric. Tragically, this horrific act of taking the life of an innocent, voiceless and defenseless human being, up to the moment of birth, now legally exists in the State of Ohio.

Since 1973 pro-lifers have sidestepped the true issue that divides the conscience of Americans which should have been addressed fifty (50) years ago. All citizens of Ohio, including all in America, need to ask themselves **"does one human being have the right to take the life of another human being"**? To answer this question, one's conscience must scrutinize the following two questions:

Question 1 is "When does the life of a human being commence?"

Question 2 is "If the life of a human being begins at the moment of fertilization, then why isn't the newly formed human person entitled to the rights, privileges, and protections provided under the Ohio Constitution and the Constitution of the United States?"

The answer to question 1 has been scientifically recognized and acknowledged for many years. A human being is formed the instant a human egg is fertilized by a human sperm, creating a new human person with its own unique DNA. Deductive logic tells us that since a fertilized human egg is now a human person, the answer to question 2 is that this newly molded person should be entitled to all of the rights, civil liberties, and protections provided under the Ohio Constitution and the Constitution of the United States. These civil liberties **include the right to life and liberty**, thus making it unlawful to slay a newly fashioned human person, whether created by in-vitro fertilization or through natural methods of fertilization.

As such, I propose that the Catholic Church of Ohio, spearheaded by the bishops, priests, deacons, and those in the religious life, champion an amendment to our Ohio Constitution called **"THE CIVIL RIGHT TO LIFE AMENDMENT"**. This amendment reads as follows:

"THE CIVIL RIGHT TO LIFE AMENDMENT"

Article 1 of the Ohio Constitution shall be modified to now include Section 23—"The Civil Right to Life Amendment". As found throughout the Constitution of Ohio, the term "men" shall now be defined to include all human beings created at the moment of fertilization. Fertilization occurs when a human egg unites with a human sperm, creating a new human person with its own unique DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid). This newly created human person is entitled to all of the rights, privileges and protections provided by the Ohio Constitution and The Constitution of the United States.

In addition, an opportunity also exists to abolish the death penalty in the State of Ohio. Instead of trusting that our elected officials of Ohio will come to an agreement on a law banning the death penalty via Senate Bill 101 and House Bill 259, Catholics should be proactive by placing a second constitutional amendment onto the November 2024 ballot. As we are currently witnessing with the Heartbeat Bill, any bill enacted by the legislative process can easily be overturned or suspended by the judicial branch of government and ruled unconstitutional. The death penalty amendment would read as follows:

"THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE STATE OF OHIO"

Article 1 of the Ohio Constitution shall be modified to now include Section 24—"The Abolishment of the Death Penalty in Ohio". As found throughout the Constitution of Ohio, all criminal codes and all statutes governing the State of Ohio shall prohibit the use of the death penalty as a form of capital punishment for a capital crime committed in the State of Ohio. The death penalty is inhumane and shall not be used in Ohio as a means for a convicted criminal to serve their debt to society.

Finally, a third amendment to the Ohio constitution should be added to the November 2024 ballot outlawing assisted suicide/euthanasia in the State of Ohio. The following individuals and entities shall be prohibited from assisting an individual in the State of Ohio from taking their own life. This prohibition shall include, but not be limited to, governmental entities within the State of Ohio, any individual, any medical doctor or health care professional, medical organization, immediate family members, relatives, and friends.

Overall, three proposed amendments protecting the sanctity of human life can be placed on the November 2024 ballot if the Catholic Church in Ohio will take the lead in this endeavor. Signatures for all three amendments can be collected at the same time. Based upon information found on the Catholic Conference of Ohio website, in 2019 an estimated 1,825,572 Catholics lived in the State of Ohio, with an estimated 1,400,000 Catholics of voting age. To place these amendments on the November 2024 ballot each proposed amendment requires an estimated 417,000 valid signatures from Ohio residents. For these amendments to become part of the Ohio Constitution it will take 50% plus 1 vote.

Placing these three proposals onto the November 2024 ballot should be very achievable as the required signatures should be collected from Ohio Catholics alone. Along with Catholic signatures, signatures from other Christian denominations and from other men and women of goodwill should well exceed 1,000,000 valid signatures. Moving forward, the battle plan should utilize the synergy molded between all who have worked so diligently over the last year to defeat Issue 1.

In summary, now is the time for the Catholic Church of Ohio to be proactive and to charter a course to protect and defend the sanctity of all human life. If nothing else, the results of the proposed amendments will act as a thermometer, providing a snapshot into the hearts and souls of those living in Ohio. While some may feel this endeavor is a waste of time and resources, I would beg to differ. The results of the November 2024 election will expose the depth of evil that exists in Ohio along with the challenges and opportunities we face as a Catholic Church to evangelize and to save souls within our own church, the State of Ohio, and throughout America in general. As God's ambassadors to this fallen world, it is our responsibility to declare the truth to all, proclaiming the value of all human life and to protect and defend all who have been created in the image and likeness of God!

Your Brother in Christ,

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