

THE ERIE ECHO

"a voice for life"

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PA Abortion Amendment Would Abolish All Pro-Life Protections

A bill to amend the Pennsylvania constitution, HB1888, was introduced by pro-abortion members of the state House of Representatives on December 6. This awful amendment would turn abortion for any reason or no reason into a fundamental right throughout pregnancy for all women and girls, including minors. The longstanding Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act would no longer prevent the use of taxpayer dollars for birth control abortions. Gone, as well, would be the commonsense protections currently provided by the Abortion Control Act: the 24-hour waiting period, informed consent standards, and parental involvement provisions. The basic right of parents to counsel their minor daughter or even know about her life-altering decision to have an abortion would be torn away.

Phone calls, letters, and emails to our state legislators are urgently needed. Please refer to peopleforlife.org for full contact information for the lawmakers who represent

northwestern Pennsylvania. Your message can be a short as, "I urge you to oppose HB1888, the 'reproductive liberty' (with quotation marks) amendment to our state constitution." But feel free to say as much as you like.

Please let us know what your state representative and state senator have to say.

After a few disappointing pro-life setbacks in recent months, the word on the street is that Americans no longer care about protecting pre-born children or their mothers—that they only care about children after they are born, we might say. It's not true! In fact, a Gallup poll taken this past May revealed a 5-point *increase* in pro-life sentiment since May 2022, before the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*.

We certainly do not want anyone, especially not our legislators or other government officials, to adopt this erroneous mindset. We have to push back at every opportunity, and responding to HB1888 is one important opportunity. (Another way

would be to put a pro-life sticker or magnet on your vehicle, but that's another story.)

When reporters ask our legislators what their constituents think about this or that piece pro-life or pro-abortion legislation, we want the lawmakers to be able to say they are being flooded with messages supporting the pro-life position.

Maria Gallagher, our state legislative director at the Pro-Life Federation in Harrisburg, tells us that she is often assured by various lawmakers and legislative aides that communications from the voters back home really do make a difference. Harrisburg does pay attention to our emails and phone calls. Consider, also, that while our messages are influencing the lawmakers' response to a current piece of legislation, they are also helping to shape his or her thinking about the human life issues for the long term.

Thank you for your prompt follow-through on this important pro-life action request!

Decision: March for Life Bus Trip

After some serious doubts, as reported in the November *Erie Echo*, we are pleased to say that our annual March for Life Bus Trip is going forward for the 51st year. At least one bus chartered by People for Life will set out for our nation's capital on Thursday evening, January 18, 2024.

Skyrocketing costs and less than robust participation in our Pennsylvania March for Life Bus Trip this past October did not bode well. But the picture improved with word from Gannon Students for Life that at least 20 students were hoping to travel with us. We also heard from a number of others who told us they were ready to sign-up despite the cost of \$90 per seat and the additional \$13 Metro fare. When a donor pledged an amount that would allow us to cut the cost to \$65, we knew we were back in business.

We are continuing to receive donations that can and will be used to sponsor individuals on an as-needed basis. Thanks to these sponsorship donations, no one has to

miss the March for Life because of financial limitations.

In case there is a groundswell of interest in the Bus Trip now that affordability is not such a pressing issue, we have a second bus on-hold until January 4. If it comes to a second bus, however, we will have to wrestle, once again, with that \$90 per seat price tag.

We love to make it convenient for people to get to the March. But, for us, the Bus Trip means a lot more than just shuttling people back and forth to Washington. Like many of our activities, the Bus Trip is an opportunity to issue press releases and attract as much attention from as many local news providers as we possibly can.

We want everyone to know that support for pro-life justice is alive, popular, and thriving. That message is needed now more than ever and worth an investment of time and effort. A sold-out bus with 55 marchers can send the right message. Two buses and 110 marchers would be better. A single, half-

empty bus? It would probably be best to forget those press releases, especially since People for Life has a long history of chartering three and four buses every year.

The political landscape is changing in our post-*Roe v. Wade* world. We are navigating uncharted territory. But the pro-life point of view is contagious. A passion for life and unwavering confidence in the rectitude of our cause will light the way to a far better future.

Our bus(es) will depart from the Blessed Sacrament Church parking lot, just across W. 26th St. from People for Life, on Thursday evening, January 18 at 11 p.m. We will catch the Metro at West Falls Church, Virginia around daybreak and head into Washington.

Those so-inclined will be able to reach the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in time for the Vigil for Life closing Mass at 8 a.m. Many other destinations are also available to our marchers. A few of the perennial favorites are: the congressional

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FROM PAGE 1 March for Life Bus Trip

cafeterias, the March for Life Expo, the Holocaust Museum, the Smithsonian Museums, and the Museum of the Bible.

The 51st Annual March for Life will begin at noon on Friday with a Rally on the National Mall followed immediately by the

March: up Constitution Ave., across the west front of the Capitol Building over 3rd St., then up Independence Ave. and over to the Supreme Court on First St.

We will not be surprised if Congressman Mike Kelly holds a reception for us after the March, as is his custom. Then it will be time to catch the Metro back to Falls Church and

get back on the road by 5 p.m. We will arrive in Erie at approximately 1:30 a.m., Saturday morning, marking the completion of an exciting and very inspiring adventure in just a little more than 24 hours.

Be part of the action. Register for the Bus Trip today. And if you need financial help, please do let us know.

Cash for Students

If you are a pro-life high school student, then you are invited to try a little public speaking and compete for cash in the annual High School Oratory Contest hosted by the People for Life Education Fund. You will experience a relaxed, casual atmosphere, and you will probably even have some fun. The competition will take place in Erie on Saturday, April 13, 2024, tentatively at 11 a.m. The exact location will depend on how many students register.

Our contest is open to high school students regardless of where they live, both traditional and home school students. Each contestant will gather information about a human life topic of his or her choice, write an original 5 to 7-minute pro-life speech, and present it before a panel of three judges. Grades 9-10 and 11-12 will compete separately. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winners in both age groups: \$150 for first place, \$75 for second, and \$50 for third.

You may discuss the sad, unpleasant realities of abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, health care rationing or destructive research on human embryos. Or, you may choose a more upbeat but related topic: adoption; motherhood; pregnancy and fetal development; a pro-life activity that you were involved with; life affirming options for a woman facing a crisis pregnancy; or the blessing of knowing someone with a developmental challenge, mental or physical. These are just some examples. If you are interested in a different topic but not sure it would be suitable, please check with us.

We would be happy to help you choose a topic and/or recommend some good sources of information. It is best to pick a topic that seems interesting to you. If you can draw on some of your own experience, all the better.

The judges will impartially score each speech and offer positive and helpful suggestions, noting your speech's weak and strong points. Originality, depth of research, accuracy, careful reasoning, and delivery style all matter.

Register in advance by emailing your name, age, grade, school, address, and phone number to office@peopleforlife.org.

You can also enter your speech in the statewide Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Oratory Contest by submitting a video to the Federation by April 15. People for Life will record speeches during our contest for any students who would like a video to submit to the Federation.

Essay Challenge

If you are a middle school or high school student, we would love to get your thoughts about the value of a human life and why each one should be respected and protected.

People for Life is calling for essays on human life topics from students in grades 6 through 12. If you take the challenge, you will have a chance to make some money. The six best essays will earn cash prizes. There will be awards of \$150 for first place, \$75 for second, and \$50 for third in two separate divisions, grades 6-9 and grades 10-12. You may participate only if you live in one these counties: Erie, Crawford, Warren, Mercer, Venango, Ashtabula, or Chautauqua.

As with our Oratory Contest (refer to "Cash for Students," above) there are many topics to choose from.

Your essay will be judged by most of the same criteria as the Oratory Contest, but spelling is also considered. Word limits are 500 for grades 7-9 and 750 for grades 10-12.

The submission deadline is April 29, 2024. Email your essay to office@peopleforlife.org. It can be sent in the body of

the email or as an attachment in Microsoft Word or PDF format. You may also mail your essay to People for Life Education Fund; P.O. Box 1126; Erie, PA 16512, postmarked no later than April 29. You must include your name, address, phone number, age, grade, and school.

You may also enter your essay in the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation contest, but you will need to submit it much earlier, by March 1. See paprolife.org for details.

49th District Senate Race

A prominent Erie-area Democrat is challenging Sen. Dan Laughlin for his seat in the Pennsylvania state Senate. Laughlin has represented the 49th Senate District since 2016. He is up for reelection in 2024. The district includes nearly all of Erie County.

The challenger's name is Jim Wertz, and he is already making abortion the centerpiece of his campaign. Wertz, on his website, publicizes his four top priorities. One of them is "protecting abortion." And according to Wertz, protecting abortion means an amendment to enshrine the abomination in the Pennsylvania constitution: "Abortion rights are under attack in Pennsylvania and across the country. Jim is committed to a constitutional amendment that protects the right to choose."

About the time Wertz announced his candidacy, a pro-abortion constitutional amendment was, in fact, introduced in the General Assembly. It would ban any limitations on abortion and block parents from intervening if a minor daughter seeks an abortion.

Formerly a local Erie news reporter, Wertz has been Chairman of the Erie County Democratic Party since 2018. He is also a liberal arts professor at West Penn Edinboro.

With a Ph.D. in communications, Wertz is apparently well-versed in the elements of sophistry. He wrote in the *Erie Reader* last August that the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation "refer[s] to contraception as 'spiritual evils.'" In other words, the anti-abortion religious extremists want to ban your birth control. Nice try. Truth is, the Federation, like People for Life, is laser-focused, to the exclusion of all other issues, on the singular, flesh and blood physical evil of deliberate killing to solve personal or societal problems. That means: abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide, and euthanasia and not birth control, unless it is abortion killing being used as backup birth control.

2024 PRO-LIFE CALENDAR 2024

Jan. 13	Pro-Life Breakfast – Bayfront Convention Center
Jan. 18	March for Life Bus Trip begins, 11 p.m.
Jan. 19	51st March for Life – Washington, DC
Jan. 20	March for Life Bus Trip returns, 1:30 a.m. (approximately)
March 1	Entries due: PA Pro-Life Federation Essay Contest
April 8	Last day to register to vote in the PA Primary Election
April 13	People for Life High School Oratory Contest – Erie
April 15	Videos due: PA Pro-Life Federation H.S. Oratory Contest
April 15	Membership Meeting – 1625 W. 26th St., Erie
April 16	Last day to request PA mail-in or absentee primary ballot
April 23	Pennsylvania Presidential Primary Election
April 29	Entries due: People for Life Essay Contest Entries Due
May 4	47th Annual Erie March for Life, 11 a.m. – downtown Erie
May 12	Mother's Day
May 20	Annual Election Meeting – 1625 W. 26th St., Erie
5/29-6/1	First public pro-life booth of 2024: Erie's Wild Rib Cook Off
June 16	Father's Day
June 28-29	National Right to Life Convention – Crystal City, VA
Nov. 5	Presidential Election

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March for Life Bus Sponsors

experience can be very powerful, even lifechanging, and the memories can last a lifetime. Pro-life people often tell us that their commitment to our cause was solidified by attending the March in their younger years.

Abortion Sanctuary Bill

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives has passed a bill, HB1786, that provides cover for abortionists who harm women and children while doing “reproductive health care” (aka, killing babies) in other states. The bill would make Pennsylvania a sanctuary state for the abortion industry.

The House approved the measure on November 14 by a vote of 117-86. One Democrat voted NO, but, very disturbingly, 16 Republicans voted YES.

The intent of the legislation is clear, as this excerpt illustrates: “A court of record of this Commonwealth shall have no authority under this section to order service upon any person for any matter in a tribunal outside of this Commonwealth involving the provision or delivery of reproductive health care services.” The bill places similar constraints

on the executive branch of the state government.

The following northwestern Pennsylvania representatives voted NO on HB1786: Jake Banta (4th District), Timothy Bonner (17th District), Lee James (64th District), Kathy Rapp (65th District), Brad Roae (6th District), and Parke Wentling (7th District). If one of them is your representative, please thank him or her. Or better yet, thank them all.

Ryan Bizzarro (3rd District), Pat Harkins (1st District), and Bob Merski (2nd District) voted YES. They should be rebuked for their slavish subservience to the abortion lobby. There is no excuse whatsoever for what they did.

Find your representative’s contact information at peopleforlife.org/legislators.html. If you are not sure which district you live in, People for Life can look it up for you.

HB1786 is now under review in the state Senate Judiciary Committee. We stand a chance of stopping this ridiculous—and dangerous—legislation in the state Senate. But the vote could be very close. If it gets to Gov. Shapiro’s desk, it will, no doubt, be swiftly signed, with fanfare, by this extremely pro-

abortion governor.

ACTION REQUEST Please urge Erie-area state Sen. Dan Laughlin (or YOUR state senator) to OPPOSE HB1786. Call (814) 453-2515 and/or email dlaughlin@pasen.gov. Tell him that out of state abortion providers should not be given special protections—should not be given sanctuary—within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania!

Shapiro Hurts Women

Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services is closing all of its pregnancy and parenting support offices in the Erie Catholic Diocese, effective December 31, 2023.

The decision was made because pro-abortion Gov. Josh Shapiro is cancelling Real Alternatives, the program through which the Counseling and Adoption Services has been receiving a considerable portion of its funding.

In 2023, the program helped 77 agencies in Pennsylvania provide pregnancy support, parenting support, adoption services, and maternity home accommodations. Elections do have consequences.

Real Alternatives was developed by pro-life Gov. Bob Casey, Sr. in the mid-90s. It has helped 350,000 Pennsylvania women since 1995.

Memorials & Tributes

<i>Given by</i>	<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Given by</i>	<i>In Memory of</i>
Roberta Cooney	Breanna J. Cooney	Anita Smith	Cynthia Manna
The Family	Leo & Beth Grumblatt	<i>Given by</i>	<i>In Honor of</i>
Lee & Mary Simmons	Ray & Peg Fitzgerald		
Betty & Jim Dalessandro	Gerri Gallagher		
Nancy Giebried	John Giebried	The Grumblatt Family	Dr. Jeffrey McGovern
		The Grumblatt Family	Dr. Kenneth Mink

JOIN PEOPLE FOR LIFE OR DONATE

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Best Phone _____ Mobile? Yes | No Other Phone _____ Mobile? Yes | No Do not text

AFFILIATED WITH (church, club, organization, business, etc.) _____ WORK/PROFESSION _____

1. DONATION: \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other Amount _____

2. MEMBERSHIP DUES (one year): Individual \$10 Family \$20 Senior Citizen /Student \$5 New Renewal

3. TRIBUTE DONATION AMOUNT _____ In Memory of or In Honor of

4. TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Donations may also be made using the DONATE button on www.peopleforlife.org or by calling-in your credit card information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Booths	<input type="checkbox"/> Liaison to Another Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> March for Life Bus Trip Help
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Calling	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Demonstrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie March for Life Help
<input type="checkbox"/> Office Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Pro-Life Breakfast Help	<input type="checkbox"/> Call me when you need a hand.
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Mailing	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Run Help	<input type="checkbox"/> Special skill? Tell us!

Please make your check payable to:
PEOPLE FOR LIFE, INC.
P.O. Box 1126
Erie, PA 16512

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www.facebook.com/PeopleforLife

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1126
Erie, PA 16512

— Office Location —
1625 W. 26th St.; Erie, PA
Usually open 10 to 5 weekdays.
Call for evening and Saturday hours.

Abortion Pill Update

The use of Mifepristone, sometimes referred to as the abortion pill as a substitute for surgical abortion has been a growing problem for many years. It is used in tandem with the ulcer drug Misoprostol. The two-drug regimen now accounts for at least half of the abortions carried out in the United States. But the situation has become more alarming since the Biden administration removed most of the safety regulations that had applied to Mifepristone since its FDA approval in September 2000. This paved the way for obtaining the pills through telemedicine without physical examinations or bloodwork to check for Rh negativity. Biden has also

cleared the way for local pharmacies to dispense the deadly pills. Misoprostol is already widely available, but it is not the *abortion pill*. It only facilitates the expulsion of the lifeless first-trimester baby after the Mifepristone has done its lethal work.

The three major pharmacy chains (CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens) immediately announced their intention to go along with the Biden administration. Thankfully, they have not yet gone through with their plans. This is likely due to pending court challenges as well as to pro-life public outcry. Currently, GenBioPro, the manufacturer of Mifepristone, lists only 20 dispensing locations on its website, genbiopro.com. Only one is in

Pennsylvania: Temple University Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy in Philadelphia.

March for Life Sponsors

Please consider helping one or more deserving individuals attend the March for Life in Washington, DC this January 19. A gift of \$65 will provide a Bus Trip seat for one person, or make it possible for two people to take the trip for half the regular price. Smaller donations are also a blessing.

Most of our sponsorship inquiries come from students and families on tight budgets. Many times, even a \$20 or \$30 subsidy will determine whether someone goes to the March or stays home. The March for Life

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46th Annual Pro-Life Breakfast

The team is working hard, but we need your help to get ready for Erie's 46th Annual Pro-Life Breakfast on Saturday, January 13. We need you to make your reservations! Why not do it right now? Go to peopleforlife.org/january2024. You will be all set in under five minutes. You can also mail a check to P.O. Box 1126; Erie, PA 16512. Reservations are \$26 for those over 12 and \$18 for ages 3 to 12. Younger kids are free. We need to hear from you by January 5 at the latest.

The tables seat 10, and reserved tables are available for groups of 8 or more. These are popular with larger groups of family members or friends, and groups from churches and other organizations, too.

As usual, the doors will open at 8 a.m., and the program will run from 9 a.m. to approximately 11:30 a.m.

We are very fortunate to be hosting another remarkable guest speaker, this year. His name is Sherif Girgis, and he is a professor at the University of Notre Dame Law School. He will talk about the pro-life path forward in the wake of the Dobbs decision and offer some pointers, as an educator and philosopher, about making the case for life to those who might not share our personal religious convictions or cultural background.

Prior to joining Notre Dame in 2021, Sherif practiced appellate and complex civil

litigation at one of the most prestigious law firms in the United States, Jones Day in Washington, D.C. Early in his career, he served as a law clerk for pro-life U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, Jr.

Now completing his Ph.D. in philosophy at Princeton, Sherif earned his J.D. at Yale Law School. He earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and a bachelor's in philosophy from Princeton.

Prof. Girgis lives in South Bend, Indiana with his wife Gabrielle and their three children, two girls ages six and four, and a one-year-old boy. Gabrielle holds a Ph.D. in politics and political theory and is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, based in Washington, DC.

And there is more! Our very own Clare Caulfield will present the speech that earned her national acclaim. It is about crisis pregnancy centers. Clare took first-place at the National Right to Life Oratory Contest this past June, after winning contests hosted by People for Life and the PA Pro-Life Federation. Clare is presently a first-year student at Gannon University and a member of Gannon Students for Life.

Speaking of students, we are providing tables for students from Cathedral Prep,



Professor Girgis

Mercyhurst Prep, and Gannon University Students for Life and looking forward to their company. We are also looking forward to being with Congressman Mike Kelly and many other pro-life community leaders.

More information about our Special Guest Speaker and the Pro-Life Breakfast is available on our website at peopleforlife.org/january2024 and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ProLifeBreakfast.