**Spring 2024** Vol. 51 / No. 1

# Right to Life of Michigan Arus

# Is Assisted Suicide Coming to Michigan?

By Genevieve Marnon

Legislative Director, Right to Life of Michigan

In November of 2023, a package of bills (S.B. 678-681) was introduced in the Michigan State Senate to legalize physician-assisted suicide, the dangerous practice of allowing doctors to prescribe lethal doses of drugs to their patients for the purpose of committing suicide. While sponsors of the bills refer to it as the "Death with Dignity Act," no matter the misleading euphemism used, the end result will be lives callously ended prematurely.

According to the American Medical Association, which reaffirmed their opposition to physician-assisted suicide (PAS) last November, "Physician assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks." In May of 2023, the Michigan State Medical Society also reaffirmed their long-standing opposition to allowing doctors to assist their patients with suicide.

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Rising healthcare costs and pressures from insurance companies to cut expenses are already threatening access to quality healthcare and prescription medicines. Injecting a lethal option for those who often have some of the highest healthcare costs, and the pressure to "choose" the more economic yet fatal option quickly erodes any achievement in expanding access to high standards of healthcare. Additionally, minority communities and people of color are put at greater risk for denied coverage.

A 2023 Kaiser Family Foundation survey on racism, discrimination, and health found that people of color often experience discrimination when seeking medical care. With the cheaper assisted suicide "option" available, those facing existing healthcare disparities may be offered this option rather than more expensive care.

Below is a Pew Research poll on support for assisted suicide for terminally ill patients:

Given the push provide a lethal option to individuals with disabilities in virtually every place assisted suicide is legal, disability rights groups and individuals with disabilities largely oppose the practice. Neither pain nor fear of future pain are in the top five reasons patients request assisted suicide, rather, existential concerns that are all-toofamiliar to the disability community: autonomy, less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable; burden on family, friends/caregivers; loss of dignity; and losing control of bodily functions.

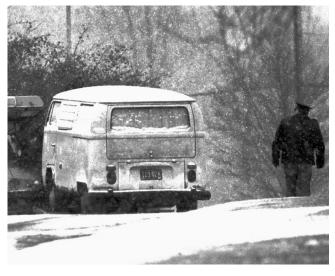
Assisted suicide has no realistic way of protecting the already at-risk communities from abuse and coercion. Any doctor could prescribe a lethal

dose and any person could administer that dose to kill a person, with medical confidentiality preventing any oversight. No independent witness is required during the death of an individual, so there's no way to ensure that the individual administered the lethal dose himself or herself.

**Opposed Physician-Assisted Suicide** 

Hispa

Michigan has a long history regarding physician assisted suicide as we are the home of Dr. Jack



Kevorkian, the infamous "mercy killer" who drove around in his "death mobile" routinely helping people kill themselves. In 1999, he was finally prosecuted for homicide after administering lethal drugs to a patient and sending a recording of the death to be played on live television. On July 28, 1998, Governor John Engler signed into law a ban on assisted suicide in 1998. In that same year, a pro-assisted suicide group created the ballot proposal known as Proposal B to allow doctors to assist their patients in committing suicide. The proposal was roundly defeated and failed with a 71-29% vote.

Unfortunately, 10 other states and the District of Columbia have legalized doctor prescribed death beginning with Oregon in 1997. There are several other countries that have legalized physician assisted suicide (PAS) as well, including Canada and the Netherlands and several others. Taking a closer look at other counties and states that have legalized PAS, it is clear to see how quickly physician-assisted suicide changes from a choice someone makes to a duty someone feels forced into. In Canada, the assisted suicide law originally only allowed for terminally ill patients to be approved; it has now expanded to include patients with an ongoing disability, chronic pain or even mental illness.

Assisted suicide advocates tout "safeguards" and "guidelines" in assisted suicide legislation, but quickly move to eliminate them after legalization of PAS. States where assisted suicide is legal have seen proposals to reduce or eliminate waiting periods; eliminate residency requirements; eliminate requirements of self-administration (a move to euthanasia); and expand the definition of terminal illness.

Physician-assisted suicide presents many significant risks to Michigan citizens. We urge you to call your State Senator and tell them to vote NO on these dangerous bills. To find your State Senator and more information on these bills, visit **RTL.org/legislation**.

Graph source: pewresearch.org/religion/2013/11/21/views-on-end-of-life-medical-treatments. Thanks to our friends at PRAF.org for collaboration in producing this resource.

# Life and Relationships



**By Amber Roseboom** *President,* Right to Life of Michigan

You'll never convince me I'm wrong. Where the Streets Have No Name, by Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame legend U2, is in fact the best song in the history of the world. If you don't agree, which I suppose is possible, listen to the masterful version that begins with Amazing Grace.

One evening a couple of years ago, living outside the nation's capital, my husband Tim and I remembered U2 was in town. After a last-minute ticket check, we were set. We headed downtown for an evening of jumping up and down and singing at the top of our lungs. The enthusiasm the band inspires is, in truth, built upon a bit more than the music itself...

Thirty years ago, when Tim and I met at college, our first "hey, we're the same" conversation was that, despite our divergent musical taste, we both loved U2. Tim's first delivery to my dorm room front desk was a Rolling Stone magazine with Bono on the cover. He then

began to play some of my favorite U2 tunes as he DJed at our local radio station.

We spent the months that followed taking long walks, listening to music and, as young people with very little cash do, driving around a city that slept sharing our hopes, dreams, and a few laughs. Tim and I didn't agree on everything, but we had similar values and a mutual respect for our differences.

Then came the stunner: I learned my new-found love was "prochoice." I knew too much about Tim to think he held this misled position for some nefarious reason. He believed this was a "pro-woman position... You can't tell a woman what to do with her own body." Many nights of discussions, built on trust, ultimately led him to change his position. He is now a staunch supporter of life and easily moved to tears at Right to Life of Michigan affiliate dinners.

While anything is possible, people are not inclined to truly change their position on an issue as emotionally charged as abortion on a street corner amidst a brief conversation. It takes an openness on our part and an honest relationship.

When talking with someone and a commonality arises, my sweet nine-year-old niece Sophie holds her hand up with her middle three fingers folded over in a partial fist and the thumb pointed up at her and the pinky pointed up at the other person. She then shakes her little hand, smiles and says "same."

That's what we all yearn for: a connection with the people around us. This is what opens hearts and minds, and it is the power behind Right to Life of Michigan. Each of our 80-plus affiliates are the built-in structure for just this sort of connection in communities across our beautiful state.

Together, may we build upon our legacy and recommit ourselves to:

- 1. Reach out and build new relationships,
- 2. Joyfully educate those around us on the value of life,
- 3. Compassionately bring the truth of abortion to women in need so they make a hopeful choice for life, and
- 4. Enthusiastically prepare for a robust election year. Our civic duty only increases in times of trial.

As one of the beautiful ads we are set to launch in the spring implores, "Hope is a choice we make..." Let us rest in His hope, recalling the words of *Amazing Grace*, "The Lord hath promised good to me, His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be, As long as life endure."

To all our prolife leaders and supporters, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for welcoming me back to the prolife work you have led in Michigan for decades. I am honored to serve

alongside you. By the grace of God, we will continue to serve and empower women and save the lives of the unborn.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in advocating for life, please e-mail us at info@rtl.org.





# Prolife Zip-up Hoodie

Share your prolife pride with this front zip hoodie available in heather royal blue with "Prolife" printed on the front and back in white text.

Shop now at:

RTL.org/store



### Choose Life Tote Bag

This reusable cotton tote bag featuring twisted rope handles is available in blue and red.

Shop now at:

RTL.org/store

Use promo code

NEWS24

at checkout for 15% off
your total order!

# Right to Life of Michigan **News**

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Right to Life of Michigan is a non-sectarian, non-partisan organization of prolife groups in the state of Michigan, committed to articulating and protecting the right to life of defenseless human beings, born and unborn.

This commitment is derived from a belief that each human being, from the time of fertilization to natural death, has an immeasurable dignity and inalienable right to life. The RLM News is a publication distributed to members and supporters of Right to Life of Michigan and its affiliate groups.

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# Why We Vote

### By Emily Kroll

PAC Director, Right to Life of Michigan

Every other year, Americans are bombarded with election information. Candidates and their messaging not only take over the news, but sports and entertainment as well. Just as election season is inevitable, it is also inevitable that someone will utter the phrase, "This is the most important election of our lifetime." While most of us probably roll our eyes at this overused line, it's not exactly wrong.

Every election is the most important election in someone's lifetime because it might be the only election in their lifetime, and the results will determine the existence of multiple generations.

Like it or not, abortion is the single most important issue facing the

like economic and foreign policy, infrastructure education, and significantly impact the quality or length of our lives; abortion—the purposeful ending of a human life in the womb—allows for the death of nearly one million children every year, while simultaneously denying the rights of women, men, parents, teachers, medical professionals, people of faith and all citizens. In essence, there is no area of our lives that is untouched by abortion.

In our system of government, voters not only elect the legislators who write the law; they also select the judges who interpret the law, and the officers who are to uphold it. Therefore, voting is a necessary activity for everyone who wishes to see human rights protected in our nation.

A single vote has the ability to change election outcomes. United States. While other issues 2023, a prolife city councilman near Grand Rapids won his race by only four votes. In 2022, three Michigan Senate seats and five Michigan House seats were determined by less than 1,000 votes each. One vote can determine if a Planned Parenthood is allowed to open in your neighborhood or if dangerous bill packages like the Reproductive Health Act are allowed to pass.

Peggy Noonan, speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan put it this way: "Our political leaders will know our priorities only if we tell them, again and again, and if those priorities begin to show up in the polls."

Even though the election results of recent years have been disappointing, the duty of every conscientious U.S. citizen to vote is more important than ever. To deny this duty is to surrender women and innocent unborn lives to the Abortion Industry.



In any struggle, the side with the most conviction has a significant edge in winning. The victory may not be sudden, but conviction on the side of truth will see us through every hardship, every loss and every moment of doubt.

So why do we vote? Well, because we are a people of conviction. Life is worth it.



# RIGHT TO LIFE OF MICHIGAN

Wednesday, May 1, 2024 Registration at 8:45 a.m.

DoubleTree Hotel, Lansing

Special Guest Speaker Wesley Smith

National leader in efforts to protect against the threat of physician-assisted suicide

### Register

Visit RTL.org/legislative-day to register, get directions to the event, find your legislator, and print Legislative Day flyers to share with others.

We hope to see you there!

The Knights of Columbus and Right to Life of Michigan Educational Fund proudly present:



### Date

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024

Social hour at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m.

### Venue SAN MARINO CLUB

1685 E. Big Beaver, Troy, Michigan

### Kęynote Speaker DAN COMPTON

Born through the hands of one of the deadliest abortionists in American history



# **Affiliate Spotlight**



Ogemaw County Right to Life held a local march to honor the unborn 51 years after Roe v. Wade was ruled (above).



Oscoda County Right to Life held a local march to honor the unborn 51 years after Roe v. Wade was ruled (above).



Representative Matt Bierlein speaking at the Tuscola County RTL Sanctity of Human Life Sunday memorial (above).





Clare County Right to Life held a pastor's event last fall (above).

# Current Status of the Reproductive Health Act and What's Next

By Anna Pluymert

Director of Education, Right to Life of Michigan

This past fall, Governor Whitmer signed the dangerous Reproductive Health Act (RHA), passed by the proabortion Democrats in our state legislature. By signing the RHA, the Governor removed longstanding and widely supported protections for women and children; basic health and safety regulations for abortion clinics were struck from Michigan law; and, shockingly, partial-birth abortion is now legal again in Michigan. The bills also included the elimination of the requirement for sanitary humane disposal of fetal remains and the removal of transparency for the abortion industry by eliminating abortion reporting.

The RHA flies in the face of the will of Michigan voters. A MRG poll in Michigan conducted October 2-8, 2023, demonstrates a stunning 95% of Michigan voters support abortion clinic health and safety regulations. This is up from 90% in May. Unfortunately, the Governor's RHA makes abortion even more dangerous for women.

While we were ultimately able to protect a woman's right to know by keeping informed consent for abortion in place, as well as protecting existing guardrails against using taxpayer dollars for abortions, we know proabortion Democrats plan to come back for these.

So, what is next for us in Michigan?

### We must:

- Protect parental rights by keeping in place parental consent for a minor seeking an abortion.
- Protect a "woman's right to know" by keeping in place Informed Consent and the 24-hour Waiting Period.
- Ensure taxpayer dollars are not used to fund other people's abortion through already strained federal and state programs like Medicaid.
- Work to protect the approximately 100 pregnancy resource centers doing good work in our communities across the state.

Thank you for your ongoing calls to Michigan legislators to advocate protection of these prolife laws!



### Right to Life of Michigan's

### STUDENT AND YOUNG ADULT OUTREACH PROGRAM

- Colleges: Community Colleges, Colleges and Universities
- High Schools
- Young Adults

Are you a prolife student or young adult looking to impact your community for life? Do you wonder what you can do?

We are here to help you start a prolife group in your community!

Have fun, make connections, join in prolife service projects, and help people make a choice for life themselves!

MiGen Leads strives to educate, support, empower and serve.

### **WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

Contact **Jazlyn Bailey**, MiGen Leads Coordinator, at **jbailey@rtl.org** or **(616) 532-2300**.

# **Motor City Baby Shower**

### By Tina Teifer

Director of Multicultural Outreach, Right to Life of Michigan

The Motor City Baby Shower, which will take place on May 18 from 12 PM - 2 PM in Detroit, will be a collaborative celebration of families. This baby shower offers a beautiful opportunity to unite various organizations, churches, and businesses to protect life and bless families through love and generosity. It was created to help support men and women who are facing an unexpected pregnancy, questioning their ability to parent, desiring encouragement, and/or needing items for their babies. There will be food, fun, and

face-painting and attendees will leave more equipped to successfully grow their family.

For more information or if you would like to volunteer or contribute, please contact Tina at (313) 212-1326.



## March for Life 2023

### By Gracie O'Brien

Media Relations and Digital Director, Right to Life of Michigan

Last November 8, 2023, Right to Life of Michigan (RLM) and the national March for Life hosted the first-ever Michigan March for Life in Lansing. The event took place on the one-year anniversary of the passage of anti-women, anti-life Proposal 3.

Thousands of Michigan citizens, young and old, came from across the state to peacefully march for life and invite women to make a courageous, hope-filled choice for life.

Speakers included former RLM President Barbara Listing, a post-abortive woman, a physician, pregnancy resource center representatives, foster care and adoption advocates and other prolife leaders. We were honored to have Chuck Gaidica, former anchor and meteorologist on Channel 4 (WDIV-TV) in Detroit, as the emcee for the rally.

We thank everyone who came that day and the many organizations who partnered to host the event!





RHA

Harms











# **Capitol Report: Surrogacy**

### By Genevieve Marnon

Legislative Director, Right to Life of Michigan

Michigan is one of two remaining states that prohibit compensated commercial surrogacy in order to protect both unborn children and their surrogate mothers from exploitation, commodification and coercion. Current Michigan law allows altruistic, non-compensated surrogacy, but providing payment for services turns the generous and self-sacrificing act of being an altruistic surrogate into a money-making proposition which in turn creates a market that can and does exploit poor and vulnerable women. Surrogacy parenting contracts treat unborn children and yet to be conceived children as objects to be purchased. They treat gestational carriers as rent-a-wombs. Current Michigan law, like many other countries such as Canada, England and Australia, bans the practice of commercial surrogacy and prevents enforcement of surrogacy contracts, but allows altruistic, noncompensated surrogacy.

Right to Life of Michigan opposes surrogate parenting contracts due to the risk to an unborn child's life. Surrogacy parenting contracts often include an abortion clause for sex selection, "health" standards, and number of babies. The unborn child with a disability, the wrong sex, or being one of multiple embryos may be killed by abortion or "selective reduction" via a contractual agreement. Surrogacy contracts allow for third party attorneys and in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics to "broker" deals between commissioning

parent(s), opening the market to the multi-million-dollar IVF industry here in Michigan to encourage more embryo creation and destruction. 92% of lab-created embryos never survive to become a live baby.

In October 2023, a 9-bill package upending our parentage laws and legalizing commercial surrogacy contracts was introduced in the Michigan House and passed on a party-line vote in lightning speed of only 16 days. Opponents of the bill package were denied an opportunity to testify against the bills on the first day in committee, and with the speed with which the bills moved, the public was not given adequate time to read and understand the implications of these bills.

In addition to opening the doors to the commercial surrogacy business, the bill package rewrites Michigan's parentage laws to eliminate the terms "mother" and "father" from the law and from birth certificates, changes inheritance laws to accommodate the possibility of a posthumously conceived (though not necessarily genetically related) child, and allows for "pre-birth" orders which dictate that the intended parent(s) names be listed on the baby's birth certificate regardless of their genetic relationship to the child, their marital status, or their ability to properly care for the child. Currently, the law requires a legal adoption of a child who is born of one woman and then given to another person. That practice is child protective, preventing the buying and selling of children.

The mantra being used by proponents of surrogacy contracts is, "we shouldn't have to adopt our own child," however, a surrogate conceived child may have zero genetic relationship to the intended parent(s) due to the use of donor eggs and sperm. Moreover, the intended parents don't have to be married to each other nor live in the same household—or even the same country.

For all these reasons, many European and Asian countries ban all forms of surrogacy including Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, China, and Japan. Both India and Thailand recently repealed laws allowing commercial surrogacy due to surrogacy tourism, the dangers to children born of surrogates, and the exploitation of their women.

Infertile couples deserve the best medical care available to help alleviate any impediments to their fertility. However, the desire to have one's own child should never overshadow the fact that the child who results from surrogacy is a unique human being whose life should not be governed by a contract.



# Are You Ready to Begin With the End in Mind?

### By Barbara Rotary

Director of Planned Giving, Right to Life of Michigan

Many years ago, I read the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. Habit 2 hit me the hardest. It is the one I remember to this day. Stephen Covey's Habit 2 is "Begin with the End in Mind."

Are you ready to begin with the end in mind? If you haven't already, there is no better way to ring in 2024! I know it's difficult because we'd like to think we will live forever. We don't want to think about the end until we get there. Understandable. But you will leave a legacy no matter what, so I'm asking you to be intentional about this decision while you still can.

The good news is you can start the process of completing a will or living trust today. You can add a beneficiary to your life insurance policy. You can designate a percentage of your estate to things you care about. Documents such as these allow you to direct your hard-earned assets to your family, loved ones, and hopefully to causes you believed in and supported during your lifetime.

As you know the threat to women and children in our state is real and expanding. At Right to Life of Michigan, we are intensely focused on deepening and expanding our presence in communities across our state to invite women to make another choice – the choice for life. We have a long road ahead and we invite you to join us on the long-term journey.

As you begin with the end in mind, please remember Right to Life of Michigan as you create

an amazing legacy that includes support for the future of our life saving mission!

Information in this article is for the purpose of providing general answers to commonly asked questions. None of the information contained herein is intended as legal advice or legal opinion relative to specific matters, facts, situations or issues. Please contact an attorney for specific legal advice.

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- ☐ Send me information about how to leave a charitable gift to Right to Life of Michigan, or RLM Educational Fund, or the RLM Educational Endowment Fund in my will or living trust.
- ☐ Please send me an estate planning brochure.

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# Thinking of others, supporting life

You can remember a deceased loved one or honor one of the special people in your life through a tax-deductible memorial or honorary contribution to the Right to Life of Michigan Educational Fund.

A thoughtful acknowledgment will be sent to the family or person you designate, while the gift amount will remain confidential. Visit RTL.org and click on the "Donate" button. Or, send a check with information about the memorial or honorarium to:

RLM Educational Fund P.O. Box 901 Grand Rapids, MI 49509

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Deacon Eric & Mary Beth Elstro.	•
(Merry Christmas!)	·
Mrs. Helen Emerson	Paul & Laurel Emerson
(93rd Birthday!)	E 1 AU 1
Barbara Listing (Retirement)	Ed Albin Gaylord RTL
(Retirement and thank you!) (Years of dedication)	David & Heather Patrick
(rears or acareation)	Paul & Joan Moses
	Angela Norton
Mrs. Mary Kuieck	Lisa Kuieck
(107th Birthday!)	
Nicole Leyanna	•
Jeffery & Donna Moss Mrs. Josephine Munaco	•
(Christmas)	Tall Wall Slivell
Mrs. Sandra Nelson	Amy & Todd Gale
(Just because)	
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	Eugene Thompson
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(Merry Christmas!) Irene Angel Schkade	Roatrica Cableada
(7th Birthday)	Deatrice Scrikade
Lindsey Shumaker	Allan Ackerman
(Anniversary)	

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Paul H Steveson.....Robert Whims

Ann Surmann.....Ed & Sarah Surmann

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Anonymous......John & Angela Bursch

David Yahoo......Allan Ackerman

(For lawsuit against MI "right" to abortion amendment)

Katrina.....MKD

Mr. John Thoma Jr.....Joan Michael Huff

Elaine Fox

(Anniversary)

(Happy Birthday)

(93rd Birthday!)

Jeremy, Nick, Nina, Hannah, Elijah,

(Merry Christmas to the babies)