Showdown with Roe v. Wade at the Supreme Court on December 1

The United States Supreme Court has scheduled oral arguments in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization for December 1. The Dobbs case will decide not just the fate of Mississippi’s ban on abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy, but the fate of Roe v. Wade itself.

In taking up the case, the Supreme Court indicated the major legal question they would address is whether or not a state can ban any abortions before the point of viability.

Roe v. Wade—together with Doe v. Bolton, which was decided the same day on January 22, 1973—held that a woman could have an abortion for any reason through all nine months of pregnancy. Any third-trimester abortion ban must have a “health” exception—defined so broadly that almost any reason imaginable counts as “health.”

The last time the Supreme Court directly revisited Roe was in 1992, in Planned Parenthood v. Casey. While the Supreme Court upheld several new prolife provisions in that 1992 case, they ultimately upheld Roe. They got rid of Roe’s ridiculous trimester framework by inventing a new framework that says states can ban abortion after the point a child can survive outside the womb—of course, only if it has that “health” exception that makes every abortion a legal exception.

Planned Parenthood v. Casey is very instructive. Once the two sides in a case participate in the oral arguments, typically two days later the justices hold a conference to vote on the cases. In Casey, the vote at the conference following those oral arguments was five to four: a majority of justices voting to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Yes, that’s correct, the Supreme Court voted to overturn Roe in 1992. What changed between the vote and the decision? Justice Anthony Kennedy was talked out of doing the right thing. He changed his vote, and with it, Kennedy sentenced 33 million unborn children to death.

33 million lives. Those lives didn’t depend on the law, or the Constitution, or our democratic process, but the personal whims of one unelected government official.

So, on December 3, 2021, when the nine justices gather to hold their vote on the Dobbs case, the fate of Roe v. Wade may be sealed—or it may not be; nothing is final until the formal decision is released. That could happen any time after the oral arguments, but most likely in the spring of 2022, near the end of the Supreme Court’s term in late June.

Still Saving Hyde Statewide

Between 1973 and 1977, the federal and state government covered 300,000 abortions through Medicaid, which equated to $45 to $55 million in tax funding. Henry Hyde, a congressman from Illinois, resolved that taxpayers should not be forced to aid in the destruction of innocent lives. The Hyde Amendment was enacted in 1976 and went into full effect in 1980. From then until now, his amendment has received bipartisan support, and even approved by Presidents Clinton and Obama. Currently, however, it’s on life support.

To understand the Hyde Amendment and what’s going on with it right now, you need to know how it works. Each year a federal budget is proposed by the president, which then needs votes by the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate before becoming final. The House and Senate bring forth bills for each government department that are voted on by their colleagues. These bills making up the federal budget are called appropriation bills, and they expire on September 30th each year.

A portion of the federal budget is designated for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Before the Hyde Amendment, funds that were granted to this department could be used to fund abortion with taxpayers’ money. The Hyde Amendment was created as a limitation amendment, or as some people say, a rider.

This means that the Hyde Amendment is added to the budget each year, and so each year the Hyde Amendment must be re-approved.

President Joe Biden presented his proposal for the 2022 federal budget earlier this summer and did not include the Hyde Amendment. In a preliminary vote on appropriations, the House excluded the Hyde Amendment by a 219-208 vote in late July. In early August, the Senate, in a 50-49 decision, decided on a $3.5 trillion budget that did include the Hyde Amendment. Democrat Senator Joe Manchin from West Virginia was the decisive vote to save Hyde.

From August until now, Congress has been working on reconciling their differences in order to pass a final budget, missing their September 30th deadline. Senator Joe Manchin has stated recently that he will not support a final federal budget that does not have the Hyde Amendment in it. His statement is an encouraging sign that the Hyde Amendment’s legacy will be upheld in Congress. Will this Democratic senator stand strong as the budget fight continues?

It’s not too late to help preserve the Hyde Amendment. Contact Congress today using our Political Action Response Team (PART) tool. Let Congress know that you do not want to be forced to pay for abortions. The tool can be found on our website at RTL.org/prolife-action.
Prolifers Never Give Up

Barbara Listing, President
Right to Life of Michigan

It is with gladness, I welcome the end of this year which has not been kind to the prolife cause. We have seen the dire consequences of a federal election giving our nation the most pro-abortion president since 1973. We face presidential directives and Congressional actions which demand citizens pay for all abortions. The President and Speaker of the House publicly tout their religious upbringing while pushing for abortion-on-demand.

On the state level, we see an executive branch determined to turn Michigan into a pro-abortion stronghold. The Governor and Attorney General have as their mission to repeal Michigan’s original law which bans abortion except to save the life of the mother.

While this toxic atmosphere might cripple or even destroy some movements, our Michigan prolife movement with determination has found other ways to save unborn babies and help women in crisis.

Prolifers lobbied at the federal level to try to save the Hyde Amendment which prevents federal funding of abortions. As I write this, the Hyde Amendment has survived for now. At the state level prolife legislators have passed life-saving legislation, although the Governor has used her veto pen to cancel their efforts.

What I have found most encouraging is how our local affiliate leaders and members have faced these obstacles. They have turned to community outreach using their skills and love for the unborn to educate their fellow citizens.

Our affiliates had a record number of fall dinners reaching thousands with the truth about the killing of babies. Prolifers across the state have had educational tables at churches, local fairs, and festivals displaying the beauty of the unborn child. There have been parades with prolife floats reminding citizens of the destruction of innocent life.

While I do not know what 2022 will bring, I do know that Michigan prolifers will never give up their efforts to restore protection to the unborn child. I am blessed to be a part of this grassroots movement of gallant protectors.
Affiliate Spotlight

Grand Rapids Right to Life and Huron County Right to Life Do Their PART

In the run up to our 48th State Conference, we announced a friendly competition between affiliates to see who could generate the most e-mails and calls to Congress for our Save Hyde Statewide campaign. The campaign uses our Prolife Action Response Team tool. Both Grand Rapids Right to Life and Huron County Right to Life did their PART to make sure Congress knows Americans oppose tax-funded abortions.

Exposition on Tax-Funded Abortions

On September 8, Gaylord Right to Life hosted an educational booth at the Gaylord Senior Expo at the Ellison Place. Volunteers discussed end-of-life issues and the Hyde Amendment with the hundreds of visitors who stopped by the table. Most took a flyer promising to make calls to their congressmen.

Tri-Cities Right to Life Rocks the Boat

At the end of July, the annual Coast Guard Festival draws thousands of visitors to the city of Grand Haven. This year Tri-Cities Right to Life asked festival goers to support the unborn and “Let Life Rock n’ Roll.”

Oscoda Right to Life’s float took 1st place in their Independence Day parade

Booth at Midland County Fair

Southern Downriver Right to Life’s billboard campaign
Over the past several months, the issue of surrogacy parenting contracts has become the topic of several news articles around Michigan. In these articles, the stories of infertile couples desperate to start families are highlighted. Compassion for their plight is elicited, and rightfully so. However, the stories never show the inherent dangers of surrogacy contracts.

Unfortunately, these one-sided stories have piqued the interest of several legislators on both sides of the aisle, and draft legislation to legalize surrogacy contracts is circulating the legislature. Right to Life of Michigan along with allies at the Michigan Catholic Conference and the Michigan Family Forum have been actively trying to educate legislators about the dangers of surrogacy parenting contracts.

Right to Life of Michigan has had a policy statement opposing surrogacy parenting contracts since 1985—the year the issue of surrogacy burst onto the national stage in the wake of the baby “M” case which originated with a contract drawn-up by a Dearborn, Michigan attorney for the commissioning parents.

The baby “M” case involved traditional surrogacy whereby the surrogate is inseminated with the intended father’s or an anonymous donor’s sperm, making the surrogate also the biological mother. Since the mid-1980’s, the practice of surrogacy has skyrocketed around the world and has moved from traditional surrogacy to gestational surrogacy. Gestational surrogacy involves the use of in-vitro fertilization (IVF). IVF creates embryos in the lab with either the sperm and egg from the biological parents, donors, or a combination of both. Today, 95% of all surrogate pregnancies are gestational surrogacy and the surrogate is not biologically related to the child.

Current Michigan law permits non-compensated, altruistic surrogacy, but bans contracts for surrogacy for several reasons. First and foremost, surrogacy contracts almost always contain abortion clauses. These clauses compel the surrogate to abort the baby upon the request of the intended parents for health reasons, sex-selection, or for simply changing their minds. If the surrogate fails to comply, she can incur serious legal and financial consequences.

“Selective reduction”—an early abortion to reduce the number of embryos—is also a standard feature of surrogacy contracts. One of the side effects of IVF is the production of “excess” embryos because the failure rate of IVF is fairly high; therefore, multiple embryos are created and implanted in the surrogate’s womb as an insurance policy against embryos dying. However, if all of the embryos implant and survive, selective reduction is often used. The “excess” embryos are often discarded, frozen indefinitely, or donated for research. This happens with current IVF practices, but legalizing surrogacy contracts will encourage more IVF and more destruction of these tiny humans.

Some say Michigan’s law is outdated and needs to be like other states’ laws which allow surrogacy contracts. We believe Michigan’s law is protective and should be maintained. Several other countries have seen the negative impact wrought by the legalization of surrogacy and have worked to restrict the practice. Many European countries have completely banned the practice of surrogacy. Michigan’s law banning surrogacy contracts is the opposite of outdated: it is ahead of its time. We encourage our prolife legislators to reject any attempts to loosen our ban on surrogacy parenting contracts.
Right to Life of Michigan has the privilege of working alongside those who rescue babies in one of the places where babies are the most vulnerable. In the city of Detroit, 61,844 babies were aborted from 2011 to 2020. This is a grim statistic and one that we are working together to change.

Here’s a statistic to ponder: how many babies and families in the city were saved? There are thousands of courageous mothers, supportive families, dedicated sonographers, pregnancy resource center directors, workers and volunteers, caring clergy, and non-profit organizations out there. Thousands of beautiful lives exist because of the collaborative work of these life savers.

Since 2017, Right to Life of Michigan has been giving grants to the pregnancy help centers that serve the Metro Detroit area, where minority groups make up a majority of residents. The Pregnancy Services Grant Program began with grants to 4 centers and has since served more than 11 centers with 36 grants.

Centers such as Detroit Pregnancy Test and Help, Stanton Detroit, and three Image of God Centers provide life-saving assistance to families in need. Right to Life of Michigan is honored to partner with these centers to extend education, material help, and support where it is needed most.

We recently visited this year’s grant recipients to deliver the checks, enjoy tours of the centers, and hear stories of success.

At Pregnancy Aid, which is situated on 8 Mile between two busy abortion clinics, Nancy Anter said that one of their goals is to be markedly different from the abortion clinics: “We care about mom, baby and community and we would like our environment to show that.” The center is filled with inviting details like comfortable seating, care packages, and even a rack of Halloween costumes for infants. Nancy said, “nothing welcomes people more than the sharing of food,” and our grant money was given to help provide healthy snacks for clients attending classes, support groups and counseling sessions.

Several of the centers, like Care Net Detroit, received funding to increase their Google advertising. The ads are an important tool for women seeking care. Resources cannot be found if they are not advertised. Another common need that the centers have is ultrasound technicians. Ultrasound imaging shows women the reality of their child’s life. Advertising and ultrasound technology are two essentials that always need ongoing support and we are happy to help with them.

Despite the pandemic, ICU BirthChoice has hired a new sonographer, began training two new volunteer counselors, and increased the number of days they are on the road—yes, they are a mobile ultrasound unit. They are a beacon of hope which meets vulnerable women/families right where they are in their pregnancy and in their lives.

We were able to provide funds for the Guadalupe Workers to purchase and install storm windows on the very old house that serves as their center. Their house in southwest Detroit is another place of welcome with selfless people ready to provide counsel, material assistance and even a sense of family for someone who is feeling very lonely.

The collaborative efforts of Right to Life of Michigan and Detroit’s pregnancy help centers has provided a greater sense of community. We hope to continue the Pregnancy Services Grant Program and save more lives in Metro Detroit.
On September 30, Right to Life of Michigan held its 48th annual State Conference at Eagle Eye Golf Course in Bath Township. This year’s theme, “You Can’t Cancel Life,” served as a powerful declaration to a culture which seeks to cancel opinions and institutions that support life. The message is a reminder that prolife people are not going away and will not stop until the life of every American is protected in law from conception to natural death.

Highlights from the event included addresses by powerful prolife speakers: Alex Schadenberg from the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition and Dan Compton, as well as various workshops designed to help equip prolife individuals to carry on the fight.

The annual conference is an excellent opportunity to meet together with prolife Michiganders, and to be equipped and encouraged for the continued struggle to protect life. Please consider joining us next year on September 29 for the 49th annual conference!
2nd Annual Meme Match Winners

The Right to Life of Michigan Educational Fund hosts an annual Meme Match for high school and college-aged Michigan youth, ages 13 to 23. Contestants create and submit an original meme (based on a pre-selected template), and contest finalists have their works shared on Right to Life of Michigan's Facebook page where the public's likes and shares help determine the winners. The contest winner receives a prize of $400 and the runner-up receives $100.

The winner of the 2021 Meme Match was Jeremiah Miller, with his meme questioning the basic premise of the bodily autonomy argument. The runner-up was Katelyn Sterk, with her creation juxtaposing the pandemic response in Michigan deeming abortion to be a "life-sustaining" activity. Congratulations Jeremiah and Katelyn!

Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October

Since the 1980s, October has been Down Syndrome Awareness Month. For the past five decades, October has been a time for the abilities and accomplishments of people with Down syndrome are to be celebrated.

Not just in October, but every day, we celebrate the accomplishment of babies living with Down syndrome. Unborn children with Down syndrome are aborted at a horribly high rate of 67%, according to one average of studies. The University of South Carolina examined several studies and found a range of 61% to 93% of babies prenatally diagnosed are aborted.

While many families share that their children with Down syndrome are a blessing and a joy in their lives, doctors frequently scare parents into abortion by predicting extreme and unrealistic futures that are filled with struggles and burdens. Abortion is the go-to for doctors when their patients find out that they are carrying a child with Down syndrome. This dehumanizes people with disabilities and devalues life in general. Down Syndrome Awareness Month strives to remind people that people with this disability have hopes and dreams just like everybody else. They have jobs, go to school, get married, and participate in the Olympics.

Down syndrome means that the baby carries an extra copy of the 21st chromosome. While it can be scary for parents to receive a diagnosis like this due to the unknown future, each and every child brought into this world, extra chromosome or not, deserves to live, to love, and to be loved.

The U.S. is moving towards the practices of Iceland and Denmark where almost 100% of unborn babies are aborted due to a prenatal Down syndrome diagnosis. These countries use prenatal genetic testing to determine the diagnosis and have normalized a society that doesn’t value all human life. Instead of seeing the joy and blessing of raising a child who happens to have an extra chromosome, they see it as a burden, as suffering.

We hope that October and World Down Syndrome Day on March 21 help teach people to accept those with Down syndrome and see that they have the right to life just as much as anybody else.

For real-life stories from families who were faced with a Down syndrome diagnosis and chose life, visit our website at RTL.org/real-life-stories.
Time Does Not Stand Still

Around this time of year, we see nature begin to prepare for the long, cold winter months ahead. The leaves on the trees are changing colors and falling to the ground. The squirrels will keep busy packing away every acorn they see. The migratory birds will begin to fly south towards warmer climates and easier access to food. And we, too, will begin preparing for the coming snow and ice. There’s much to do to get ready.

In anticipation of what’s around the corner tomorrow, most of us feel secure in making plans and being prepared. That’s why we buy life insurance, take money out of our paychecks for that retirement 401K, and why we open college plans and being prepared. That’s why we buy life insurance in anticipation of what’s around the corner.

There’s much to do to get ready.

The good news is that you can still begin the process of completing a will or living trust. These documents allow you to direct your hard-earned assets to your family and loved ones, and if you so desire, to causes you believed in and supported during your lifetime. Only 40% of adults have a will or trust prepared. Many are not ready for whatever tomorrow may bring. A successful outcome for their family and the causes they support may be in jeopardy.

You have the opportunity today to take care of your loved ones and prearrange charitable gifts to organizations like Right to Life of Michigan. Let us know how we can be of service to you, your family and your professional advisors.

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