RELIGIOUS LIBERTY NOW UNDER FIRE: DFL lawmakers aim to put abortion-up-to-birth in the Constitution

DFL LAWMAKERS in St. Paul are pushing a sweeping pro-abortion and anti-faith constitutional amendment this spring. If passed by the legislature, Minnesotans would decide whether to ratify the amendment in November of 2024 or 2026.

The proposal, a version of the so-called “Equal Rights Amendment” (ERA), would (among other things) establish a right to abortion up to birth in the state Constitution. Although Minnesota law already includes such a right (enacted last year), the ERA would enshrine it in the Constitution itself, where it would be extremely difficult to undo. Future pro-life lawmakers would be prevented from enacting even modest protections for unborn children or their mothers. Babies late in pregnancy, who can feel pain, would be denied basic protection under our Constitution.

Faith and conscience under attack

The ERA proposal goes even further, however, by intentionally removing protection for “creed” or religious faith (which a previous version included). That means pro-life Minnesotans’ religious and conscience rights are now under serious threat—and the threat is not limited to the ERA. When considering related bills this year, DFL lawmakers have rejected numerous attempts to safeguard the conscience rights of people of faith.

If ratified, the ERA could be interpreted to force doctors, nurses, and religious hospitals to participate in abortion. It could also be interpreted to deny parents the opportunity to opt out of controversial subjects in school, mixed-sex locker rooms, and more, and to require religious organizations and schools to violate their own faith commitments.

Help stop the ERA

Your help is critical to stop the pro-abortion ERA. Please share this information with your family, friends, and neighbors, and encourage all of them to contact their legislators (regardless of how they think their legislators might vote).

As this newsletter goes to press, the ERA has not yet passed the legislature, but it could soon. Please visit mccl.org or contact MCCL for the latest updates. When contacting your state senator and state representative (see back page for contact information), tell them to vote against the “Equal Rights Amendment” and to safeguard the religious and conscience rights of Minnesotans.

There’s still time: MCCL’s May 3 gala with Jim Caviezel

YOU ARE INVITED to join MCCL and actor Jim Caviezel (star of The Passion of the Christ and Sound of Freedom) on May 3 for a special pro-life gala as we prepare to fight the biggest battle we’ve ever faced and rebuild a pro-life Minnesota. But time is running out: The deadline for registration is April 25.

As this newsletter goes to press, general admission tickets (as well as Guardian and Patron sponsorships) are almost sold out. If you do not purchase your tickets in time, you will be placed on a wait list.

Don’t miss this unique opportunity

Please secure your tickets (or your spot on the wait list) today at mccl.org/gala. Sponsorship opportunities that include tickets to the V.I.P. reception with Jim Caviezel (including our popular Silver-level sponsorships) are still available!

The gala takes place on Friday evening, May 3, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Bloomington. More information, registration, and sponsorship options can all be found online or by contacting MCCL.

Don’t miss this unique opportunity to hear a powerful message from Jim Caviezel and to be part of bringing Minnesota back to life—so that every baby is protected and every mother is supported and loved!
It's here: The biggest pro-life battle ever in our state

BY SCOTT FISCHBACH

YOU MAY have thought, after last year, that it couldn’t get any worse. Minnesota lawmakers passed the PRO Act to establish a “fundamental right” to abortion in state law, and they repealed most of the commonsense pro-life policies we had helped enact over the decades.

How could it get worse?

Well, it can. Abortion advocates know that the PRO Act and other anti-life actions can be repealed by future pro-life legislators. The harm from last year can be reversed.

So here’s what they’re doing: They’re trying to make what they did last year permanent. They’re trying to make abortion-up-to-birth a right guaranteed in our state Constitution—a guarantee that could take many years to change.

The ERA: Pro-abortion, anti-faith

That’s what the proposed version of the so-called “Equal Rights Amendment” (ERA) would do (see page 1). Minnesota’s ERA is almost identical to New York’s radical “Equality Act.” Both would enshrine unlimited abortion in the state Constitution (while also advancing a controversial gender ideology). But Minnesota’s ERA is actually more radical because it excludes protection for the rights of “creed” and “religion.”

Health care professionals could be forced to take part in abortion. Parents and faith-based schools and organizations could lose their right to live out their faith.

In other words: Minnesota’s ERA isn’t just about denying any and every unborn child the most basic protections under the law for years or decades to come. It’s also about targeting you and other people of faith and conscience and making sure you can’t opt out.

We can’t win without you

If the legislature passes the ERA this spring, it will then go before voters in an upcoming election. At MCCL, we’ve been preparing for this battle for months now, but we can’t fight it without pro-life Minnesotans all across the state engaging with us and making a difference in their own spheres of influence.

Here are some ways you can help.

First, visit mccl.org to check on the current status of the ERA, and make sure you contact your legislators. Tell others to do the same. We’re working hard to keep the ERA from even getting to the ballot box, and the pressure you apply makes a big difference.

Second, if you haven’t already, register for our Compassionately Pro-Life Gala on May 3 with Jim Caviezel. Time is running out before the April 25 deadline, but there still might be some tickets available. You can register now at mccl.org/gala. The gala will play a crucial role in our plans to defeat the pro-abortion agenda and rebuild a pro-life Minnesota.

Connect with us this summer

Third, connect with and support us this summer. We’ll do outreach at fairs all across the state, and we need volunteers (see page 7). We’ll hold our Life Leadership Camp for high schoolers two different times, and we need your help to promote it (see page 5). And we’ll continue ramping up our new Center of a Pro-Life Minnesota, which strives to reach more communities throughout Minnesota as we make the case for protecting babies and supporting their moms.

Please engage with us. Follow us on social media. Talk to your friends and neighbors about abortion and religious liberty.

It’s our biggest pro-life battle ever in Minnesota, but—with each of you—I know we can win.

YOU MAY have thought, after last year, that it couldn’t get any worse. Minnesota lawmakers passed the PRO Act to establish a “fundamental right” to abortion in state law, and they repealed most of the commonsense pro-life policies we had helped enact over the decades.

How could it get worse?

Well, it can. Abortion advocates know that the PRO Act and other anti-life actions can be repealed by future pro-life legislators. The harm from last year can be reversed.

So here’s what they’re doing: They’re trying to make what they did last year permanent. They’re trying to make abortion-up-to-birth a right guaranteed in our state Constitution—a guarantee that could take many years to change.

The ERA: Pro-abortion, anti-faith

That’s what the proposed version of the so-called “Equal Rights Amendment” (ERA) would do (see page 1). Minnesota’s ERA is almost identical to New York’s radical “Equality Act.” Both would enshrine unlimited abortion in the state Constitution (while also advancing a controversial gender ideology). But Minnesota’s ERA is actually more radical because it excludes protection for the rights of “creed” and “religion.”

Health care professionals could be forced to take part in abortion. Parents and faith-based schools and organizations could lose their right to live out their faith.

In other words: Minnesota’s ERA isn’t just about denying any and every unborn child the most basic protections under the law for years or decades to come. It’s also about targeting you and other people of faith and conscience and making sure you can’t opt out.

We can’t win without you

If the legislature passes the ERA this spring, it will then go before voters in an upcoming election. At MCCL, we’ve been preparing for this battle for months now, but we can’t fight it without pro-life Minnesotans all across the state engaging with us and making a difference in their own spheres of influence.

Here are some ways you can help.

First, visit mccl.org to check on the current status of the ERA, and make sure you contact your legislators. Tell others to do the same. We’re working hard to keep the ERA from even getting to the ballot box, and the pressure you apply makes a big difference.

Second, if you haven’t already, register for our Compassionately Pro-Life Gala on May 3 with Jim Caviezel. Time is running out before the April 25 deadline, but there still might be some tickets available. You can register now at mccl.org/gala. The gala will play a crucial role in our plans to defeat the pro-abortion agenda and rebuild a pro-life Minnesota.

Connect with us this summer

Third, connect with and support us this summer. We’ll do outreach at fairs all across the state, and we need volunteers (see page 7). We’ll hold our Life Leadership Camp for high schoolers two different times, and we need your help to promote it (see page 5). And we’ll continue ramping up our new Center of a Pro-Life Minnesota, which strives to reach more communities throughout Minnesota as we make the case for protecting babies and supporting their moms.

Please engage with us. Follow us on social media. Talk to your friends and neighbors about abortion and religious liberty.

It’s our biggest pro-life battle ever in Minnesota, but—with each of you—I know we can win.
REMEMBERING LEO LALONDE, MCCL’S LONGTIME PRESIDENT

BY SCOTT FISCHBACH

MCCL’s beloved president emeritus, Leo F. LaLonde, died peacefully on March 17 surrounded by his loved ones. Leo was 81 years old. We will never forget him and all that he meant to the cause of life—here in Minnesota and far beyond.

Enormous accomplishments for life

Leo joined the pro-life movement in 1971, two years before Roe v. Wade legalized abortion nationwide. He was elected president of MCCL in 1976, a position he faithfully held for 46 years.

Leo’s accomplishments for unborn children and other vulnerable human lives were enormous. During his tenure as president of MCCL, he helped build and expand MCCL’s pro-life educational, legislative, and political programs; grow the pro-life movement across the country through MCCL’s Mission Possible program; advocate for life internationally through MCCL’s Global Outreach program; and reduce abortions by about 50 percent in Minnesota.

Leo also represented Minnesota on the National Right to Life (NRLC) Board of Directors and served as the pro-life director of the Minnesota Knights of Columbus. He worked with MCCL chapters across the state; spoke all throughout Minnesota, in other states, and at national conventions; and used his computer and online expertise on behalf of MCCL and NRLC.

Thank you, Leo!

I had the honor to work with Leo for decades. He was a good man. He was faithful all throughout his life. And we are so grateful for him.

Leo, rest in the light and the love of our Creator! Please keep Leo’s family and friends in your prayers.  

MCCL
Honor moms and dads with print ads

MCCL’S MOTHER’S DAY and Father’s Day print ads are a meaningful way to acknowledge moms and dads. They are a loving reminder of parents’ sacrifices on behalf of their children.

The ads are available in full color or black and white, and can be sized to fit any publication. The ad materials are available at no charge from MCCL; however, most newspapers will charge you to run it.

Simply contact us at pstark@mccl.org or by calling the MCCL office. We will email the ad directly to your newspaper or church; this will provide the best quality reproduction. Please provide the publication’s advertising email address when you contact us. 

Submit your speech for MCCL’s Pro-Life Oratory Contest

HIGH SCHOOL juniors and seniors can learn more about the pro-life view and how to effectively articulate it by taking part in the MCCL Oratory Contest!

To enter the annual contest, students must research, write, and present a five- to seven-minute pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, or euthanasia. Contestants must submit a video recording or YouTube video of their speech to the MCCL state office; submissions may be made through May. A select group of pro-life judges then evaluate the submissions and select a winner. The winner has the option to compete in the national contest June 28-29 at the National Right to Life Convention in Arlington, Virginia.

More information is available online at mccl.org/youthcontests.

Minnesotans make case for life in national essay contest

TWO MINNESOTA students were among the winners of the 2024 National Right to Life Essay Contest. Participants wrote essays answering the question “Why are you pro-life?”

In the junior division (for students in grades 7-9), Estelle H. of Minnesota (grade 7) finished in second place. “When my brother was in my mother’s womb, we learned from the doctors that he had a deformity that could likely be caused by a chromosome disorder,” she wrote in her essay. “The specialists suggested aborting him. ... [My brother] Jude is now one of thirty in the world with this chromosome disorder, and he is thriving and loved by me and my family, just as he was from the very moment of conception.”

‘The joy is invaluable’

Another Minnesotan, Sadie T. (grade 8), came in third in the junior division. “You see a little bundle of joy with a chubby face, two large, sparkling eyes and tiny hands and feet. The baby grins at you, making its already plump face even rounder. What do you do?” Sadie wrote. “You smile back, of course. ... The joy that babies bring is invaluable, and the baby itself is irreplaceable. The damage done through abortion cannot be undone. It causes so much harm and it needs to be stopped.”

The Essay Contest is held each year and open to all students in grades 7-12. To participate in the 2025 contest, essays should be submitted between December 20, 2024, and January 22, 2025. More information is available online at nrlc.org/essaycontest.
High school students: Our pro-life summer camp is coming June 24-27 and Aug. 11-14

EQUIPPING the next generation is a critical part of building a pro-life Minnesota. That’s why MCCL is expanding our annual pro-life summer camp for high school students. This year’s Life Leadership Camp will be offered twice—June 24-27 and Aug. 11-14 (students pick one). Both will take place at Koronis Ministries in Paynesville, which is west of the Twin Cities in central Minnesota.

Life Leadership Camp offers four days of pro-life education (two full days and two partial days), including guest speakers and sessions covering topics relating to abortion and other right-to-life issues. It equips students to make a difference in their schools and communities. And it does so in a summer camp environment with games and fun outdoor activities.

The camp is open to high school students who will be entering grades 9-12 or who will be college freshmen in the coming fall. Cost to attend is $100 per student, which includes meals, accommodations, materials, and a T-shirt; scholarships may also be available.

Register for camp now
We encourage students to register for this inspiring and informative pro-life event—and we encourage parents, church leaders, and others to share information about Life Leadership Camp with the students in their life.

You can find more information and register today at mccl.org/camp, where a promotional poster is also available.
A Gift FOR LIFE

YOU CAN HONOR LOVED ONES by making a contribution in another person’s name to advance the cause of life. Your gift to MCCL’s Tribute and Memorial Program will enable MCCL to continue and/or expand our vital pro-life efforts on behalf of unborn children and other defenseless human beings.

MCCL will send an acknowledgment card to the honored person or to the family of the deceased (without indicating the specific amount given) and a postcard to the donor to confirm receipt of the gift. Donors who wish to have their remembrances published in MCCL News may note a request for publication at the time of the donation.

Contributions are deductible as charitable giving for income tax purposes.

Your contribution is sincerely appreciated.

THANK YOU!

MCCL TRIBUTE & MEMORIAL PROGRAM

Please PRINT all information
Enclosed is our gift of $ ____________________________
IN HONOR / MEMORY OF:
Name ____________________________
For (occasion) ____________________________
PLEASE SEND ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO:
Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City, State, Zip ____________________________
FROM:
Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City, State, Zip ____________________________
E-mail Address ____________________________

Recent contributions to statewide pro-life activities include these memorials:

In memory of

Doris Crofton
from Monica and Philip Araoz

NOT SURE HOW TO TALK ABOUT ABORTION?
START BY ASKING QUESTIONS

BY PAUL STARK

MANY PRO-LIFE people are reluctant to converse with others about abortion because they don’t know all the arguments or have answers to every question. They lack the confidence to engage.

Answers are important, of course—and you should try to learn them. But the truth is that you can have a confident and productive conversation even if you don’t know anything. How? By asking questions.

The advantages of asking questions

Questions allow you to talk with rather than at the other person so that you don’t seem pushy or obnoxious. They show that you respect them and want to hear what they have to say. They help you understand the other person’s point of view and avoid incorrect assumptions (most people’s views on abortion are complicated).

Questions also take pressure off you. You’re not the one making assertions. You’re just asking questions, listening, and directing the conversation in a non-threatening way.

Here are three ways to effectively—yet comfortably—use questions when you talk to others about abortion.

1. “What do you think about this?”

First, use open-ended questions to get dialogue started naturally. Share an article or video on social media, for example, and ask someone what they think about it. Or say to your friend or acquaintance: “Hey, did you see that Minnesota could put abortion-up-to-birth in our state Constitution? What’s your take on that?”

2. “What do you mean by that?”

Second, use questions for clarification and to gain more information. You want the other person to clearly explain their position. In two books about the value of questions (Tactics and Street Smarts), author Greg Koukl suggests employing variations of the question “What do you mean by that?”

Here are a few examples (along with some possible follow-up questions you might ask after listening and allowing the conversation to progress):

- “You say that abortion is health care. What do you mean by ‘health care’? Do you mean treating disease and restoring health? Are you saying that pregnancy is a disease?”
- “You say that when life begins is a matter of opinion. Do you mean ‘life’ in a biological sense? Or are you talking about when someone becomes valuable or has a right to life?”
- “You believe a fetus is biologically human but not a person. What do you mean by ‘person’? Are you saying there are some human beings who don’t count as persons?”

In some cases (though not all), supporters of abortion haven’t carefully thought through their own position beyond bumper-sticker slogans. Clarification questions challenge them to do just that.

3. “How did you come to that conclusion?”

Third, use questions to (graciously) make the other person defend their view. Why do they believe what they do? What reasons do they have? Are those reasons any good? Koukl offers the model question “How did you come to that conclusion?”

Most abortion supporters aren’t used to providing answers. “It’s often only when we’re asked to explain something that we realize whether we have answers, and whether those answers make sense,” writes Stephanie Gray in her book Love Unleashes Life: Abortion and the Art of Communicating Truth.

Here’s how this third use of questions might look:

- “You say that laws against abortion cause women to die. What evidence supports that conclusion?”
- “You say that a fetus doesn’t have rights until she has consciousness. Why do you think consciousness determines someone’s rights? What about other human beings who are not currently conscious?”
- “Your position is that women have a right to abortion because they have a right to their own body. I understand that the unborn child is inside and dependent on the pregnant woman’s body. But why do you think the right to bodily autonomy includes a right to employ violence against the body of this child?”

Questions have power

As Gray puts it, “Questions have power.” They get people thinking in a way that a speech or lecture usually can’t. Questions force people to grapple with the issue in their own mind—to seriously consider their own views and why they hold them. And that can lead to persuasion.

Keep in mind, though, that you won’t be persuasive if you steamroll the other person with aggressive interrogation. Take time to genuinely listen and understand. Treat the other person with respect and care. Don’t try to “win” the argument. Instead, aim for a real dialogue.

To advance the cause of life in your sphere of influence, you don’t need to have all the answers. You can go a long way just by respectfully asking a few questions.
shift at your county fair booth is an enjoyable and rewarding experience—and not difficult. Most important is your friendly, outgoing demeanor.

Don’t worry about having all the answers to people’s questions. If they ask questions you cannot answer, you can offer them an appropriate brochure or simply refer them to the MCCL website or state office. We will provide you with additional instructions so that your shift goes smoothly.

Support this statewide outreach
If interested in volunteering for our county fair booth project, contact the MCCL state office at 612-825-6831 or mccl@mccl.org. And remember—you can sign up to staff MCCL’s State Fair booth, too, at the end of the summer. Thank you!

HELP US FIGHT FOR LIFE THIS SUMMER

The push to put unlimited abortion in the Minnesota Constitution—and to even target the conscience rights of people of faith—adds an urgency to all of MCCL’s work.

We’re fighting to defeat the proposed ERA at the legislature, and planning for an all-out effort to stop it at the ballot box if necessary. We’re expanding our pro-life educational programs like Student Day at the Capitol and Life Leadership Camp. We’re reaching all across the state with our county fair outreach (see below). And we’re growing our new Center for a Pro-Life Minnesota with a mission of spreading the pro-life message to new groups of people, creating a culture of persuasive conversation, and rebuilding a pro-life state that respects and protects everyone.

It can’t happen without you
All of this takes enormous coordination, finances, and dedication. And MCCL supporters make it possible. We need your help today.

To contribute, please fill out and return the coupon to the left, or donate online at mccl.org/donate. Thank you for fighting with us this summer!

JOIN OUR PRO-LIFE FAIR OUTREACH!

MCCL’s pro-life county fair booths have been a summer tradition since 1971. MCCL staffs booths at about 90 county fairs—by far our biggest educational outreach of the year.

You can help by visiting and thanking the MCCL booth volunteers at your local county fair. Or better yet, volunteer for a shift or give a generous gift (see the top of this page) to help offset the cost.

A rewarding experience
Millions of people visit Minnesota county fairs each year. MCCL’s booths are an effective way to inform people about abortion extremism, the current ERA threat, and the case for protecting life—and to engage them in our efforts to rebuild a pro-life Minnesota.

Volunteering for a three- or four-hour

Because, in addition to educating, we are involved in working for legislation to protect human life, donations to MCCL, Inc., are not deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.
Action Box  APRIL-JUNE  2024

Contact your state legislators and urge them to oppose the pro-abortion ERA; please tell others to do the same (see pages 1 and 2).

Secure your tickets right now for our pro-life gala with Jim Caviezel on May 3 (see page 1).

Encourage high school students to take part in one of MCCL's Life Leadership Camps this summer (see page 5).

Connect with MCCL on social media (scan the QR code at right) and sign up for our email newsletters at mccl.org/email.

Volunteer to help with a pro-life booth at your county fair (see page 7).

Support MCCL's pro-life advocacy and outreach this summer (see page 7).