

March for Life 2023: a Resounding Success

On November 8, over 5,000 enthusiastic pro-lifers from all sections of the state descended on Lansing for the first Michigan March for Life. The date was strategically chosen: it was the one-year anniversary of passage of Proposal 3 that inserted abortion rights into the Michigan Constitution.



Initially, the weather did not cooperate. With temperatures in the 40s and light rain at the start of the rally, people wearing rain gear were unpacking their umbrellas. Though the cold continued for the duration of the rally and march, the rain stopped. But the weather did not dampen the spirits or lungs of attendees who cheered and roared in support of speakers.



RLM President Barb Listing began the rally

Right to Life of Michigan president Barbara Listing spoke first, recalling the recent heart-breaking news that the state House had approved most of the Reproductive Health Act—a tragic consequence of the 2022 mid-term election in which pro-abortion majorities took control of both House and Senate. Barb introduced our featured speaker, the national president of the Washington, DC-based March for Life, Jeannie Mancini. She was thrilled and very encouraged to see so many people attend the rally.



About three dozen of our pro-life legislators

This rally portion of the event (with people crammed in front of the Capitol building) featured speeches from people representing a wide variety of pro-life causes or ministries. One speaker addressed the issue of foster care and adoption. She had fostered 35 children and adopted three of them. Another person (an OB-GYN) spoke about the amazing work done at pregnancy care centers where professional staff and volunteers offer love and hope to women and families facing unplanned pregnancies. She is the medical advisor at a center in Mt. Pleasant. Standing behind her were about 30 men and women who manage pregnancy care centers all over the state.



Some 30 representatives of pregnancy care centers

Two members of the state legislature spoke. A representative from Macomb County spoke about the valiant efforts of her fellow pro-life lawmakers in trying to stop the Reproductive Health Act. She was joined by State Senator Thomas Albert, whose district includes portions of Kalamazoo County (Climax and Wakeshma townships). He reminded us that though we have been accused of being extreme by the pro-abortionists and their allies in the media, the opposite is true. It is extreme to kill unborn babies in the womb—a human being with unique DNA—in the name of reproductive freedom.

The final speaker was a young woman from Florida who told of her tragic five abortions while a college student before being radically changed and transformed by Jesus. She received healing and

forgiveness from her past. She now runs a ministry to help women choose life for their babies.



National March for Life President Jeannie Mancini

After the speeches, the crowd moved to the other side of the Capitol and marched about three blocks to the Hall of Justice where we turned a corner and returned to the Capitol grounds. It was a sight to see.



Several members of our Kalamazoo group are eager to March for life!

The line of marchers stretched a half-mile. Many people held life-affirming signs. Someone brought a drum that reverberated through the crowd, its slow rhythmic cadence reminiscent of a funeral procession. Many people were energized, others were more reserved. All were very respectful and dignified. There were no counter-protesters. The photos here and on the next few pages give a sampling of the March for Life. PS The chartered bus experience was great. Many pleasant discussions. The driver did an exceptional job. **Thanks to KRTL president Jean Talanda for spear-heading the event with help from Rob Karrer, Mona Ruse, Candy Courtney, Geneva Crawford, and Liz Schmitt.**



A Challenge to Proposal 3 in Federal Court

At the November 8 March for Life, RLM president Barb Listing told the crowd that some 16 pro-life and pro-family organizations have filed a lawsuit in federal court to challenge the constitutionality of Proposal 3. While this is just the beginning of a long, legal battle over abortion rights, we are heartened that this issue is before a federal district court, not a state court. Lawsuits in federal court, even if lost at the district level, can be appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (covering Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee). Appeals can be made in state courts too, but the end of the line is the state Supreme Court...and pro-abortion judges hold the majority. Our legal challenge would never win if heard by the state's highest court. We would have a much better chance if the US Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal.

The consequences of Proposal 3: Reproductive Health Act passes in Michigan Legislature

We have heard the expression: elections have consequences. In 2022, Michigan voters reelected Gretchen Whitmer as governor. Voters flipped the state House and Senate, replacing pro-life majorities with pro-abortion lawmakers. Proposal 3 passed by wide margins, the voters having been fooled and misled by pro-abortion groups and their willing accomplices in the media. Abortion was now enshrined in our state constitution. We would now reap the whirlwind.

In 2023, the Michigan Legislature officially repealed our 1846/1931 pro-life law that banned abortion throughout all stages of pregnancy. In September, the state House introduced an 11-bill package under the larger title: the Reproductive Health Act (RHA). The various bills would repeal pro-life laws that had been enacted some 30 or 40 years ago. The House, with its very narrow 56 to 54 member advantage, could defeat any attempt to amend or water down these bills. The legislation was first approved in the House Public Health Committee. One member, a Democrat from Detroit named Karen Whitsett (who is pro-abortion), objected to two the bills. One dealt with our informed consent law that also required a 24-hour waiting period. She stated, "If a woman intends to terminate the life of her baby, it is not too much to ask that she be required to wait a day to think about that decision." She also objected to having taxpayers fund abortions because she believed that money earmarked for senior citizens would now be diverted to pay for abortion. Whitsett voted with the pro-life Republicans on those two bills. Because of the 56-54 House split, Whitsett's lone vote our direction would result in a 55-55 tie vote, thus killing the two bills. Knowing this, pressure was applied for her to fall in line with her party. The final House vote on the Reproductive Health Act was delayed by over two weeks because of her actions. Meanwhile, the RHA was introduced in the state Senate. It passed along party lines: 20 to 18.

Finally, on November 1, the full House voted on all 11 bills. Nine of those bills passed by the slimmest of margins: 56 to 54. What pro-life laws were repealed? Clinic licensing, abortion reporting (statistics) including the number of abortion complications, the humane disposal of fetal remains, the ban on partial-birth abortions, the abortion insurance opt-out law, and a law that shifted family planning dollars away from abortion providers.

It is hard to believe that lawmakers would oppose making sure that a medical clinic would be licensed or inspected. How does requiring clinics to provide statistical information impose an undue burden on a women seeking abortion? Human disposal of fetal remains? Will abortion providers now grind up remains or burn them in incinerators? And now we have legalized infanticide by legalizing partial-birth abortions.

The good news! It's hard to find good news in this story, but Rep. Karen Whitsett held her ground on the two bills she opposed. The Democratic majority was forced to amend the portion of the bill that would have repealed informed consent. They also amended the other bill that reinstated our ban on state-funded abortions. NOTE: the RHA did not include a 12th bill that would have repealed our parental consent law. Democrats wanted to strip that right from parents but realized that that was an unpopular and polarizing issue. So, the good news is that while we lost the majority of bills, we were able to keep informed consent, a 24-hour waiting period, and protections for taxpayers not wanting to pay for Medicaid abortions.



Pro-lifers under-perform again in 2023 election round-up

On November 7, Americans in key states voted for governor. In Virginia, voters would decide if state House and Senate would be controlled by Democrats or Republicans. But the most closely-watched item was the referendum in Ohio. Issue 1 was similar to our Proposal 3: it would enshrine abortion rights in the Ohio state Constitution.

When the votes were all tallied, reality set in, a wake-up call to pro-lifers. The gubernatorial race in Kentucky pitted pro-abortion incumbent Andy Beshear against pro-life state Attorney General Daniel Cameron. Though Kentucky voters favored Trump by 62 percent in 2020, voters preferred Beshear in 2023.

In Virginia, Republicans lost control of the state House and state Senate. Gone was Governor Glen Youngkin's opportunity to pass any kind of restrictive pro-life law in 2024.

In Ohio, Issue 1 passed easily, 56 to 44 percent, almost exactly the percent we lost in Proposal 3. Ohio is a pro-life state: it favored Trump in 2016 and 2020. Mike DeWine is the state's popular pro-life governor. In 2020, voters elected pro-life J.D.Vance as US senator. But, with Issue 1, pro-abortion groups spent \$67 million for TV and radio commercials, enough to confuse and mislead voters. The pro-life coalition could only raise half that amount.



*We were all encouraged to see so many college and high school students at the March. They are the **FUTURE** of the pro-life movement.*



The Kalamazoo Right to Life Board

wishes everyone a blessed Merry Christmas!

Kalamazoo Right to Life, Inc.
PO Box 2366
Kalamazoo, MI 49003

Non-Profit Organization
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Veep Corner

Rob Karrer

On Sunday, November 12, Right to Life of Michigan Vice-president of Operations Amber Roseboom, appeared on Fox News to talk about the current problem facing the pro-life movement. We lost in Ohio's Issue 1, we were defeated in losing the Virginia State House, we lost in the Kentucky gubernatorial race. Amber said that the movement "needs to correct" in two areas: money and messaging. In Michigan (with Proposal 3), pro-abortion groups raised \$47 million, 77 percent of that in \$500 donations or more from out-of-state donors. Pro-lifers raised \$21 million, one-tenth of one percent of that in \$500 donations or more from out-of-state contributors. At the national level, large pro-life donors need to step up and invest in these statewide referendums if we want to compete and win. Regarding messaging, Amber believes that we can win by defending consensus issues on abortion. Taxpayers should not have to pay for abortions at the state or national level. Women should be able to rely on informed consent to get all the facts concerning the abortion procedure. We must defend parental consent or parental rights when it comes to minors. American voters support these commonsense regulations and policies.