

## Reported Abortions: 2012-2021

Year	Florida (reported by AHCA)	US (reported by National Right to Life)
2012	76,151	1,011,000
2013	71,503	958,700
2014	72,107	926,200
2015	72,023	899,500
2016	69,770	874,100
2017	69,064	862,300
2018	70,083	886,677
2019	71,914	886,677**
2020	72,232	886,677**
2021	79,817	886,677**

\*\* estimates for calculation purposes

Florida is among the states with the highest numbers of reported abortions. There remains much work to be done.

## What You Can Do

- Join FLCAN, the Florida Catholic Advocacy Network, at [www.flaccb.org](http://www.flaccb.org) to receive updates and alerts on public policies and make your voice heard.
- Attend Catholic Days at the Capitol in Tallahassee to participate in a briefing on current legislative proposals and meet with your Florida state legislators.
- Contact your diocesan respect life office to join in their efforts.
- Join or help start a respect life ministry at your parish.
- Support a local pregnancy center that assists mothers in need.
- Attend or coordinate prayer vigils.
- Above all else, pray for children, born or unborn, and those who have died by abortion; for men and women who have lost a child to abortion; and for those who are currently considering abortion.

## In the Holy Father's Words



It is...necessary to express the strongest possible opposition to every direct attack on life, especially against the innocent and defenseless, and the unborn in a mother's womb is the example of innocence par excellence.

Anyone who is Christian has a duty to bear witness to the Gospel: to protect life courageously and lovingly in all its phases. I encourage you to do this always with closeness, proximity: so that every woman may feel respected as a person, heard, accepted and supported.

Address of Pope Francis to the Italian Pro-Life Movement, April 11, 2014

Source: [vatican.va](http://vatican.va)

## Culture of Life Series

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**This brochure and others in the Culture of Life Series are available to view and print at:**  
**[www.flaccb.org/culture-of-life](http://www.flaccb.org/culture-of-life).**

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*“Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live...”*

**Deuteronomy 30:19**

## Protecting New Life in Florida:

***A Comprehensive Review of Key Laws and Policies***

## Abortion and the U.S. Supreme Court

**2022**—*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturns *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, holding that the right to privacy under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution does not protect a woman's decision to obtain an abortion and that states have the authority to legislate restrictions and prohibitions of abortion procedures throughout all stages of pregnancy.

**2016**—*Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* strikes down requirements that abortionists have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles and that abortion facility standards be equivalent to ambulatory surgical centers.

**2007**—*Gonzalez v. Carhart* upholds restricting partial-birth abortion.

**1992**—*Planned Parenthood v. Casey* establishes “undue burden” standard, but upholds: informed consent, 24 hour reflection period, and requirements that abortion facilities maintain patient and procedure records and reports.

**1986**—*Thornburgh v. ACOG* strikes down: requirements that a woman be informed of the abortion procedure's risks and that she be offered printed materials describing fetal development and agencies offering abortion alternatives.

**1983**—*Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health* strikes: requirements that post first trimester abortions take place in a hospital, parental and informed consents, 24-hour waiting period, and humane disposal of fetal remains.

**1976**—*Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth* strikes down: spousal and parental consent laws in addition to the prohibition of saline abortions.

**1973**—*Roe v. Wade* interprets the constitutional “right to privacy” as guaranteeing a right to abortion, but allows states to regulate abortion after viability while requiring a health exemption. This exemption, as defined in the supplemental decision *Doe v. Bolton*, allows a doctor to consider a broad range of factors including physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age, essentially allowing for abortions until the moment of birth.

## Unique Challenges in Florida

Since 1976, states have passed many laws within the framework of *Roe v. Wade* and other U.S. Supreme Court decisions to minimize the harms of abortion. Now that *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* are overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, states are allowed to pass laws regulating and prohibiting abortion through all months of pregnancy.

Florida's ability to enact laws regulating abortion has been hampered by the limitations of an amendment to the Florida constitution, passed by voters in 1980. Florida courts wrongfully interpreted the amendment as providing a broader right to privacy than the federal constitution under *Roe v. Wade* and providing a fundamental right to abortion. The 1989 Florida Supreme Court decision interpreting the amendment, *In re T.W.*, may need to be revisited so that some Florida laws prohibiting pre-viability abortion procedures can be upheld.

## Florida Laws Protecting the Unborn

As of July 2022, Florida's statutes protect the unborn by:

- prohibiting abortions after 15 weeks' gestation, with an exception for fatal fetal abnormalities (2022)
- requiring parental consent of a parent when a minor seeks an abortion (2020)
- codifying the Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program and requiring the Department of Health to contract with the Florida Pregnancy Care Network (FPCN), a network of pregnancy care centers, to provide pregnancy support services (2018)
- requiring that mandatory informed consent disclosures to women seeking abortions occur at least 24 hours before the procedure and while the physician is physically present in the same room as the patient (2015)
- prohibiting abortion if required testing determines the unborn child is viable (2014)

## Florida Laws Protecting the Unborn

Continued from previous column:

- allowing criminal prosecution if a person commits any crime that causes the death of, or bodily injury to, an unborn child (2014)
- applying abortion coverage restrictions to Affordable Care Act exchange health plans (2011)
- securing state funding for pregnancy support services (2005)
- requiring notification of a parent when a minor seeks an abortion (2005)
- establishing rules for abortion clinics' physical facilities, clinic supplies and equipment standards, clinic personnel, medical screening and evaluation of each abortion clinic patient, abortion procedure, recovery room standards, follow-up care, and incident reporting (2005, expanded in 2016 to require abortionists have admitting privileges or the facility have a transfer agreement with a hospital within 30 minutes by emergency vehicle)
- allowing women to leave a baby, up to 7 days old, with a licensed health care professional at any hospital, emergency medical services station or with a firefighter at any fire station in Florida (2001)
- requiring abortion providers receive informed consent from a woman obtaining abortion, explain the risks of both the abortion procedure and carrying to term (1997) and give the patient the option to view an ultrasound image of her unborn child (2011), followed by a 24-hour reflection period before initiating the abortion (2015)
- requiring proper disposition of fetal remains (1981)
- prohibiting 3rd trimester abortions, with exceptions for life and health of the mother (bill passed in 1976)