

Family & ProLife News Briefs

November 2024

Free Speech, Parental Rights, Pregnancy Help Centers

“The second I found out I was pregnant I considered abortion but was unsure.”

Mackenna Greene (age 26) took the white pill on Jan. 4th, but started to regret it. The next day she searched to see if the abortion pill could be reversed and found a pro-life nurse practitioner who immediately gave her **progesterone**. Greene stayed on the regimen for several weeks. In August, she gave birth to a healthy baby girl.



Chemical abortion requires two pills. The first, mifepristone, prevents the pregnancy from developing, usually killing the unborn baby. The second pill, misoprostol, causes the woman's body to expel the baby's remains.

Abortion-pill reversal works more than half the times if taken within 24 hours of the first abortion pill. Studies opposing pill reversal claim it is harmful, but the evidence is inconclusive thus far, and has worked for many women. (excerpt from Matthew McDonald, New Mom Overjoyed, *National Catholic Register*, 10/30/24)

CDC Report on Abortions

- California, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Hampshire and New Jersey no longer report abortion data to the federal agency. Latest available data is for 2021.
- 87% of women getting abortions were unmarried
- 43% of them had one or more prior abortions
- 57% of women who aborted were in their 20s
- 31% of them were in their 30s; 8% were teens
- 61% of women who aborted their developing babies had one or more other children

In summary, those who commit most abortions are unmarried women in their 20s and 30s who already are moms. (<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductive-health/>)

At Times I Feel Dispirited

“Dobbs exposed the extent of popular support for abortion. Legalized marijuana fills the streets of New York with the stench of weed. War grinds on in Ukraine and Gaza. Illegal immigrants flow across the border, in spite of popular opposition. When I'm oppressed by the thought that mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, I return to another one of Solzhenitsyn's insight: 'It is up to us to stop seeing Progress (which cannot be stopped by anyone or anything) as a stream of unlimited blessing, and to view it rather as a gift from on high, sent down for an extremely intricate trial of our free will.' The same holds for Regress. Let's stop wringing our hands and do what we can and must, leaving the ultimate disposition of the affairs of men in God's hands.” (R.R. Reno, *First Things*, Oct. 2024)

Supreme Court May Hear Free Speech Case

The American Center for Law & Justice is “battling for the free speech of sidewalk counselors to counsel women before they walk into an abortion clinic. In *Turco v. City of Englewood, NJ*, we will argue that buffer zones around abortion clinics **infringe on the First Amendment rights** of sidewalk counselors. We advocate not only for clients like Jeryl Turco but also for all individuals engaged in peaceful expression in public spaces. We will ask the Justices to allow sidewalk counselors to continue their important mission of supporting women and their unborn children at the very spot where that message can have its greatest power. Should the Court grant our petition, a decision on the merits will have far-reaching implications for how free speech is protected nationwide.” (excerpt, *ACLJ Battle Report*, Fall 2024)

Catholic Hospitals & ‘Gender Reassignment’

To treat our human maleness or femaleness as “re-assignable” is to invite serious harm into the lives of those who may be dealing with genuine and deep-seated psychological challenges regarding their own “gender identity.” Catholic health care facilities serve their patients by directing them towards supportive psychotherapy to address the underlying issues prompting them to seek gender-transition. A group known as “Do No harm” [<https://donoharmmedicine.org/>] released a searchable internet resource that catalogs sex change treatments (2019-2023) on minors in the U.S. It reveals that a number of Catholic facilities have been involved in “gender reassignment” practices – **surgeries, prescribing hormones or puberty blockers**. This information reminds us of the need for more thorough ethical formation to counter pro-transgender ideology. Some Catholic hospitals may have ended these practices, but the database does not indicate this. (Rev. Tad Pacholczyk, National Catholic Bioethics Center, Oct. 2024)

Abolish the Family?

The country that tried for decades to abolish the family has now become its leading defender at the UN. In a debate, diplomats from Russia said they would “draw the line” at the family. It was a surprising turn of events. During the Cold War the Soviet Union spread the communist teaching that the family was a capitalist social construct that perpetuated traditional norms and hindered the state from attaining revolutionary social goals. Today Russia insists the **family is the bedrock of society**. Conversely, Western delegations that once upheld the family as a foundation of the right to privacy and a bulwark against government overreach now deem it an obstacle to social progress, women's rights and homosexual “rights.” (excerpt, Center for Family & Human Rights, *Letter from the UN Front*, Oct. 2024)

The Call to Participate

“It is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom. The love and service of one’s country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity. ... No matter when we vote, **casting our ballot** is a significant expression of our participation in serving the common good of our country, state, and local community.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2239)

To help voters, the USCCB has issued *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. (USCCB.org/sjp) Noted is the **top moral priority**: “Issues that directly affect human lives such as abortion & euthanasia are fundamental and demand serious consideration.”

Some States Oppose Pro-Life Pregnancy Centers

In July, the Governor of Massachusetts launched a \$1 million ad campaign to discredit the work of pro-life pregnancy support centers. The billboard ads and website falsely claim pregnancy centers are deceptive, misleading, and spread medical disinformation just because they don’t offer abortions. In August, Your Options Medical, a pro-life pregnancy center with four locations, sued the state.

In 2023 such centers in Massachusetts provided help to over 4,000 women and provided over \$1.5 million in assistance. A national survey found that 97% of pregnancy center clients had a positive experience and/or were satisfied. Significant is that **most services are offered free of charge**. In NJ and California, pregnancy centers have also been targeted by their Attorney General. (excerpt, *Prolife Across America*, *VIP News*, Fall 2024) **Free book for first three persons who email the editor:**

Fr. Kirby’s small but inspiring book uses the Stations of the Cross to address fallen-away family members: Way of the Cross: For Loved Ones Who Have Left the Faith.

School Choice Marches On

There are some 80 education choice programs in at least 30 states. Arizona was the first to offer an education savings account (ESA). Florida has tens of thousands of children enrolled in private or charter schools, or homeschooling. Georgia, Iowa, Alabama, Indiana, Utah & others have school choice programs that include private schools, magnet schools, school vouchers, and tax-credit scholarships. **Many low-income families take advantage of these choices.**

Those opposed to school choice say that funds for these alternatives siphon money away from traditional public schools. However, it is a fundamental right of parents to decide which school their children should attend, not school unions. Moreover, the cost of per-student vouchers is often less than the cost of public education, so government vouchers cost taxpayers less than having the student in a public classroom. (excerpt, Phil Donahue, *Catalyst*, Oct. 2024)

Gender Ideology Beats Parents Rights

For the 2020-21 school year, Montgomery County (MD) Bd. of Education adopted ‘Guidelines for Gender Identity’ that permits schools to develop student ‘gender support plans.’ The guidelines allow schools to implement these plans **without the knowledge or consent of parents** – and even to authorize schools to withhold information about the plans from parents if the school deems the parents to be ‘unsupportive.’ Thus far, lawsuits to stop this interference with parental rights have failed.

The School Board’s assault on parental rights is not limited to keeping parents in the dark when it comes to children pursuing ‘gender transition.’ It is also denying religious parents the right to **opt their children out of indoctrination**. The county has directed teachers to us ‘Pride Storybooks’ with preschool through eighth grade students. The result is a sinister indoctrination on matters related to human sexuality and identify at odds with most traditional religious teaching.

Catholic scholars Mary Rice Hasson and Theresa Farnan have been stalwart in warning of the danger of gender ideology in our nation’s schools. ‘It is now impossible to put the transgender genie back in the bottle, at least in the public schools,’ they wrote in their 2018 book *Get Out Now: Why You Should Pull Your Child from Public School Before It’s Too Late*. Sadly, it looks as if they were right. (Andrea M. Picciotti-Bayer, *National Catholic Register*, 6/16/24)

In 2015, the ACLU published ‘Schools in Transition: A Guide to Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools.’ About 20,000 districts have adopted some version of a secrecy or parent-exclusion policy. **Parents Defending Education** is a group that tracks these policies by school district (<https://defendinged.org>). (Salvo, Fall ‘24)

Did You Miss These Stories?

Human Life is Not a Commodity – Italy Extends Prohibition on Surrogacy (Dan Hart, *The Washington Stand*, 10/22/24)
‘Shut These Murderers Down’ – 3 States File Abortion Pill Lawsuit (Ben Johnson, *The Washington Stand*, 10/22/24)
British Man Convicted of Thought Crime After Praying Silently Outside Abortion Center (Steve Ertelt, *LifeNews.com*, 10/16/24)

Do Late-Term Abortions Still Happen?

Though they are a small percent of the total, available data indicate that close to **10,000 late-term abortions** (21 weeks gestation or later) occur each year in the USA. Studies have consistently found the majority of late-term abortions occur for the same reasons as other abortions, such as financial pressures and relationship problems. (editorial excerpt, *National Catholic Register*, 10/30/24)

This monthly newsletter is used by dozens of churches as a bulletin insert and as a handout. Since 2013 it has had over 30,000 readers and is now posted on three diocesan websites. To receive each month’s free issue in your inbox, email Frank Tinari, Ph.D. at tinarifr@shu.edu