



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

600 REED ROAD, SUITE 102, BROOMALL, PA 19008 (215) 877-2660 (215) 877-2688 FAX NCBCENTER.ORG

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State by State

- Issue 1, adding a constitutional protection for abortion to Ohio's state constitution, passed following elections earlier this month. The language grants a "right to make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions, including . . . abortion," and further stipulates that "[t]he State shall not, directly or indirectly, burden, penalize, prohibit, interfere with, or discriminate against" anyone" for exercising or aiding in the exercise of this "right." For further information, click [here](#).
- A state senator from Ohio, Sandra O'Brien (R-Ashtabula), has introduced a bill giving nonrefundable tax credits to pregnancy resource centers, which is the first pro-life bill to be proposed in the wake of the passage of Issue 1. When introducing the bill, she stressed the importance of taking "concrete steps to support women and families facing an unexpected pregnancy." For further information, click [here](#).
- Some States are planning on holding votes on amending their constitutions with regard to abortion in 2024 in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision. Maryland and New York are confirmed to have ballot measures providing for abortion as a state constitutional "right," whereas Iowa and Pennsylvania plan to put on the ballot that there is no constitutional right to abortion. Other States contemplating similar amendments include Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, South Dakota, and Washington. For further information, click [here](#).
- The Michigan House of Representatives passed the Assisted Reproduction and Surrogacy Parentage Act, which allegedly aims to secure the "rights of children born through surrogacy." Critics of the Act say that the law undermines the actual rights of children by allowing for those seeking surrogacy to purchase eggs, sperm, and wombs, which disregards the importance of natural biology. For further information, click [here](#).
- Right to Life of Michigan is challenging the abortion amendment added to the Michigan state constitution, following the passage of Proposal 3 in 2022. Right to Life hopes to at least parts of the amendment, which guaranteed adults and minors alike a "right" to "reproductive health care," including sterilization, prenatal care, abortion, or infertility treatments. For further information, click [here](#).
- Paulette Harlow, a 75-year-old woman from Kingston, Massachusetts, who has significant health issues, could face up to 11 years in prison following her conviction under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act. Ms. Harlow's attorney is hoping to reduce the maximum sentence to a simple home detention. For further information, click [here](#).
- The Oklahoma State Supreme Court denied the State Superintendent Ryan Walters of schools from intervening in a lawsuit involving the first religious charter school in the country, St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School, after the State Attorney General Gentner Drummond filed suit against the Oklahoma Statewide Virtual Charter School Board for violating religious liberty protections guaranteed by the

State. The Court said that Oklahoma State Department of Education and Walters did not have a legitimate interest in the affair and, so, could not intervene, but that they could submit briefs as amici curiae. For further information, click [here](#).

Federal Courts

- A photographer won a settlement for refusing to take pictures for a homosexual “marriage,” following the Supreme Court’s decision in *303 Creative vs. Elenis*. There, the Court declared that “the First Amendment envisions the United States as a rich and complex place where all persons are free to think and speak as they wish, not as the government demands,” thereby allowing religious practitioners to voice their views in the carrying out of their businesses. For further information, click [here](#).
- Following his acquittal for violation of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, Mark Houck has filed suit against the Department of Justice for “malicious and retaliatory prosecution” of him in enforcement. The FBI raided Houck’s home, while his family was home, in connection with an October 2021 incident where Houck pushed a pro-abortion activist who threatened his twelve-year-old son. Houck was found not guilty of the violation after only one hour of jury deliberations. For further information, click [here](#).

National

- Several Christian groups have shown support for a reauthorization of President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). PEPFAR has been used by the Biden administration to fund pro-abortion organizations. The organizations funded promote abortions across the world. For further information, click [here](#).
- A study recently showed a sharp 11% decline in support of gay “marriage” among Generation Z, from 80% in 2021 to 69% in 2023. Other generations, by contrast, showed an increase in support over the same two year period. For further information, click [here](#).
- 27 U.S. Senators signed a letter asking the Biden administration to end its policy of providing for travel expenses for servicewomen to obtain abortions. The Senators noted in their letter that military spending funds were never so appropriated, and, moreover, requires American taxpayers to fund the facilitation of abortion. For further information, click [here](#).

International

- The Helsinki Court of Appeal unanimously ruled that two Christians in Finland were not guilty of “hate speech” for expressing their religious beliefs against same sex “marriage.” While Paul Coleman, Executive Director of ADF International, is grateful for the victory, he nevertheless lamented that it came only “after four years of police investigations, criminal indictments, prosecutions, and court hearings” under Finland’s infamous “hate speech” law. For further information, click [here](#).
- In the early morning of November 13, Indi Gregory, an eight-month year old girl from the United Kingdom with a rare mitochondrial disease, passed away after the High Court ordered that she be taken off life support against her parents’ wishes. Italy had granted Gregory citizenship after the Vatican had offered to admit her to its pediatric hospital expense-free, but the High Court, likewise, denied the request to transfer. Although Gregory’s parents do not identify as religious, they decided to

have her baptized, her father saying, “I have seen what hell is like and I want Indi to go to heaven.” For further information, click [here](#).

- The Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig, Germany denied requests by two men to acquire a lethal drug in order to commit suicide, suggesting alternative methods of physician-assisted suicide. While saying that administration of the drug is “incompatible with the purpose of the law, which is to ensure the necessary medical care for the population,” the Court nevertheless upheld a “right” of individuals to end their own lives of their own volition For further information, click [here](#).

Of Note

- At the U.S. bishops’ Plenary Fall meeting, they reaffirmed that opposition to abortion remains their “preeminent priority” ahead of 2024, stating as much in the amendment to the introductory note of the document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.” The amendment passed with a vote of 225 pro, 11 con, and 7 abstentions. To read the document, click [here](#). For further information, click [here](#).
- The Catholic Conference of Bishops in France condemned French President Emmanuel Macron for pushing to solidify abortion as a constitutional “right” in France. For further information, click [here](#).

Bioethics Public Policy Report compiled by Justin Corman.

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