



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

July 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

Across the country, state legislatures have passed legislation showing us the value they place on human life. Here in Michigan, it is now our time. A citizen's initiative petition drive is currently underway to help pass legislation to end the inhumane practice of dismemberment abortion. In 2018, there were 1,908 dismemberment abortions performed in Michigan, or more than 5 per day. This drive, organized by Michigan Right to Life, is operating under the committee name, Michigan Values Life. This petition is endorsed by the Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) and Michigan's bishops. Legislation to ban this practice was passed by the state legislature earlier this year, but Governor Whitmer promised to veto the proposed legislation when it reaches her desk. With a successful citizen's initiative, citizens can sponsor legislation which becomes law after the legislature takes a simple majority vote, bypassing the Governor. The proposed legislation would ban the procedure by amending the state's 2011 law which bans partial-birth abortion.

Right to Life is seeking to collect approximately 400,000 signatures. As Catholics this is our time to live the Gospel and show that all life is sacred! With the passage of New York's 'Reproductive Health Care Act' bill earlier this year, we have seen the devastating effects of legislation that does not protect our most innocent. We must make efforts to preserve and enhance life at all stages.

Please note that this petition drive should not be confused with the 'Michigan Heartbeat Coalition' petition. While the heartbeat petition is also gathering signatures, MCC has serious concerns with the proposal, as it could weaken existing Michigan abortion law. Michigan Heartbeat Coalition is not supported by MCC or Michigan's bishops.

Let us pray for everyone who has been affected by abortion. The Lord is always near with mercy and forgiveness. For those of us in Michigan who value life, the way forward is clear. We must let our elected representatives know our opinions on this matter and do all that we can to explain to them why the Church teaches about the sanctity of life as she does.

For additional information, visit GRdiocese.org or MichiganValuesLife.org.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids