

Join Us for Annual Candlelight Vigil

January 22 marks the 39th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion across the United States. Every year Right to Life remembers the countless unborn victims as well as fathers, mothers, and all who have been harmed by abortion, by holding a candlelight vigil on the court square in Sidney.

Please join us on Sunday, January 22, at 7pm at the courthouse for this year's vigil. We request that you park across the street from the court square and that you bring wind-protected candles or other illumination for the candlelight procession.

Immediately following the vigil, at approximately 8pm, travelers will be boarding buses to ride to Washington for the National March for Life, which will be held on Monday the 23rd (see page 2).

The tide in our nation is slowing turning toward recognition of the need to protect unborn human life. Join us on the 22nd to pray for the continuing conversion of our leaders, our communities, and ourselves.

Mark your calendar

- Deadline for submissions to the February newsletter: Jan. 22.
- Board meeting: Jan. 3, 7pm.

Clothing center report

We served 174 people during the month of November, of whom 65 received free items, three took literature, and four were referred to the Women's Center.

Remember RTL

Please remember the pro-life cause when planning your estate or making funeral arrangements for a loved one. Remittance envelopes for memorial donations to Right to Life are available at the office.

Right to Life of Shelby County is a 501(c)(3) educational and service organization. All donations are fully tax-deductible.

2011 Legislative Summary

Elections make a difference. That is one of the lessons from the 2011 legislative session in the state of Ohio. With pro-life majorities in the House and the Senate and a pro-life governor, a series of pro-life measures were passed this year. They include:

--A ban on later-term abortions (after viability).

--A ban on abortions in public hospitals.

--A ban on insurance coverage of abortions for local government employees.

--A requirement for the state to apply for abstinence education funding.

--Protection for college pro-life student groups.

--Exclusion of abortion coverage from the state health insurance exchange created by Obamacare.

At the time of printing, two other important measures were pending: The "Heartbeat Bill," which would prohibit abortion after the identification of a beating heart (approximately 10 weeks of pregnancy); and a bill to defund Planned Parenthood.

Although there has been debate within the pro-life movement over the heartbeat legislation, it has in any case been a banner year for pro-life political progress in Ohio. Thank you for your support of pro-life candidates and legislation.

March for Life Bus Trip

Two buses will be traveling to Washington for the National March for Life, to be held Monday, January 23. The buses will depart following the vigil on Sunday the 22nd (approximately 8pm) and travel through the night. They will arrive at the Verizon Center in Washington for a Catholic Youth Mass and Rally. After the rally, attendees will head to the March. In the late afternoon, the buses will depart Washington and arrive back in Sidney on the morning of the 24th. Cost for the trip is \$75, which includes bus and metro travel. Travelers are responsible for their meals. Space is limited, so please contact Bonnie York--526-4388--as soon as possible if you are interested in joining the bus trip.

Pro-Life Oratory Contest: \$300 Grand Prize!

The 2012 Shelby County Pro-Life Oratory Contest for high school juniors and seniors will be held Monday, February 20 (President's day), at 6:30 pm at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sidney. Prizes for 1st through 3rd places are \$300, \$150 and \$100 respectively. The winner will continue to the state contest (Saturday, April 21 in Columbus). Contestants are to research, write, and present an original pro-life speech—5 to 7 minutes in length—on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or stem cell research. See www.nrlc.org/oratory/index.html for rules. The winner of the state contest receives an all-expense-paid trip to the national contest (June 30 in Washington DC) where the top prize is \$1000.

Many research resources are available at the Right to Life office, on Poplar St. across from the courthouse. Rules, other guidelines, recommended online resources and tips will be sent to any student who registers. Contact Anne Schmiesing at 937-492-5584 or director@shelbycountyrtp.org with questions or to register. Registration deadline is Thursday, February 16.

Giving Thanks for Pro-Life Victories in 2011

As 2011 draws to a close, it is worthwhile to pause and reflect upon the many victories gained in the protection of all human life. It is through the accumulation of these victories that we draw ever closer to our goal: a country where every human being is welcomed in life and protected in law.

2011 brought an explosion of life-affirming laws enacted in the States. Forty-seven states considered more than 460 bills to protect women and their unborn children. State legislatures enacted more than 70 life-affirming, abortion-related measures. On the federal level, 2011 witnessed a new vitality in Congressional efforts to protect life, including legislation introduced to address the anti-life provisions of the health care law and to stop taxpayer funding of abortion.

Although efforts to repeal the anti-life Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) failed in the Senate, the House passed the Protect Life Act this Fall by strong bi-partisan vote. It amends the PPACA by prohibiting the federal government from requiring private insurance companies to cover abortion, ensures that no health care reform funds are used to pay for abortion, and protects health care providers from discrimination for refusal to participate in abortion. This year also witnessed an increase in Congressional efforts to protect the American taxpayer from supporting abortion. Consistent with longstanding federal law and policy—and the overwhelming majority of Americans who oppose the use of their tax dollars to support abortion—Congress introduced the No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act. This Act, which the House passed with bi-partisan support earlier this year, establishes a permanent, government-wide prohibition on the use of federal taxpayer funding for elective abortions and the subsidization of insurance coverage for elective abortions. Continued on page 4

In memory of Roger Heitkamp, in whose name a memorial donation was made.

+May he rest in peace.+

Obama Admin Discriminates Against Pro-Life Charities

The following are the remarks of Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) during a congressional hearing, December 1, 2011. The hearing was to investigate the denial of federal funds to a Catholic organization, evidently due to that organization's policy against providing abortion services in conjunction with its main purpose of fighting human trafficking.

A little over a decade ago, I authored the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TPVA) of 2000—the landmark law that created America's comprehensive policy to combat modern day slavery. Among its many mutually reinforcing provisions designed to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute those who reduce people to commodities for sale—the three Ps—my legislation established the Health and Human Services grants program under review today.

For over a decade, we have achieved an amazing left-right, religious-secular, bicameral, bipartisan consensus, unified in combating sex and labor trafficking at home and worldwide without promoting abortion. Until today. In what can only be described as an unconscionable abuse of power, the Obama Administration has engaged in what amounts to bid rigging; denying taxpayer funds to a demonstrably superior organization—the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)—with an exemplary ten year track record of performance that scored significantly higher in independent HHS reviews than two of the three NGOs that got the grant.

The Obama Administration's discriminatory practice of funding NGOs that provide or refer for abortions even when they fail to win a competitive process is not only unjust, unethical and in violation of conscience laws (Weldon Amendment and Coats-Snowe), but it severely undermines public—and Congressional—confidence and support for what is an otherwise laudable program. If you are a Catholic, or other faith-based NGO, or a secular organization of conscience, there is now clear proof that your grant application will not be considered under a fair, impartial, and transparent process by the Obama Administration. The Obama Administration's bias against Catholics is an affront to religious freedom and a threat to all people of faith.

Let's not forget that the independent HHS reviewers found the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to have: "one of the most experienced national experts on human trafficking documented by program guidelines, development, research, direct service provisions"; a "comprehensive system in place..." that has assisted over "3,012 victims of trafficking and their family members from over 98 countries over the past ten years"; and "demonstrated strong partnerships" by engaging "with both faith-based and non-faith based organizations." And yet the Catholic organization was discriminated against solely because it fundamentally respects the innate value and preciousness of an unborn child and refuses to be complicit in procuring his or her violent death by abortion. Even though HHS reviewers gave the USCCB a score of 89 compared to 74 for Tapestry and 69 for the U.S. Committee on Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), the latter two got the contracts.

The bottom line is this: pernicious pro-abortion favoritism, embedded in this egregiously flawed process, does a grave disservice to the victims of trafficking. Victims deserve better. The women and children who have been exploited by modern day slavery need our help, which is why I wrote the law in the first place.

LifeNews.com, December 1, 2011. Edited for space and used with permission.

Keep an Eye Out for 2012 Membership Letter...

Within the next three weeks you should receive a letter from Right to Life asking you to renew your membership for 2012. Please return the letter with your dues as soon as possible. Prompt response helps us to avoid the labor and cost of reminders and provides us with timely volunteer information. Many thanks for your generosity and dedication to the pro-life cause!



P.O. Box 72 Sidney, OH 45365-0072

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SIDNEY, OH
PERMIT NO.
508

Return Service Requested

Giving Thanks for 2011 Continued from page 2

The debate over ending the taxpayer-funded stream of money—over \$363 million dollars a year—to Planned Parenthood accelerated this year. For the first time in history, the House voted twice to cut federal funding to the nation's largest abortion provider. Although the Senate failed to pass either measure, a victory was gained through the budget agreement forged by Speaker John Boehner (R-OH), which forced the Senate to debate the issue and to have an up-or-down vote on whether an organization whose fraud and abuse are well-documented should continue to thrive at the American taxpayers' expense. The launching of the first ever Congressional Investigation of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its affiliates by the Energy and Commerce Committee – to examine its “institutional practices and policies” and “handling of federal funding” – was an historic moment. The investigation was spurred by growing evidence of abuse and fraud found within Planned Parenthood.

Another notable victory of 2011 was the reinstatement of the Dornan amendment in the 2011 appropriations bill, which ensures that funds generated through federal taxes and those generated through local taxes are not used to destroy innocent human lives in the District of Columbia. The policy was changed for the first time in the 2009 Appropriations bill; thus, Congress' reinstatement of the Dornan amendment this year restored consistency with the longstanding policy that no taxpayer dollars may be used to support elective abortion.

As we prepare to celebrate Life this Christmas, let us rejoice in this year's victories for life and appreciate the strong groundwork they provide for the opportunities 2012 presents for future success.

By William Saunders and Kellie Fiedorek. LifeNews.com, December 20, 2011. Edited for space.

*May the birth of Christ be a reminder to all that the birth of every child is a precious gift.
Merry Christmas to you and yours, and may God grant you peace and joy in the New Year.*