

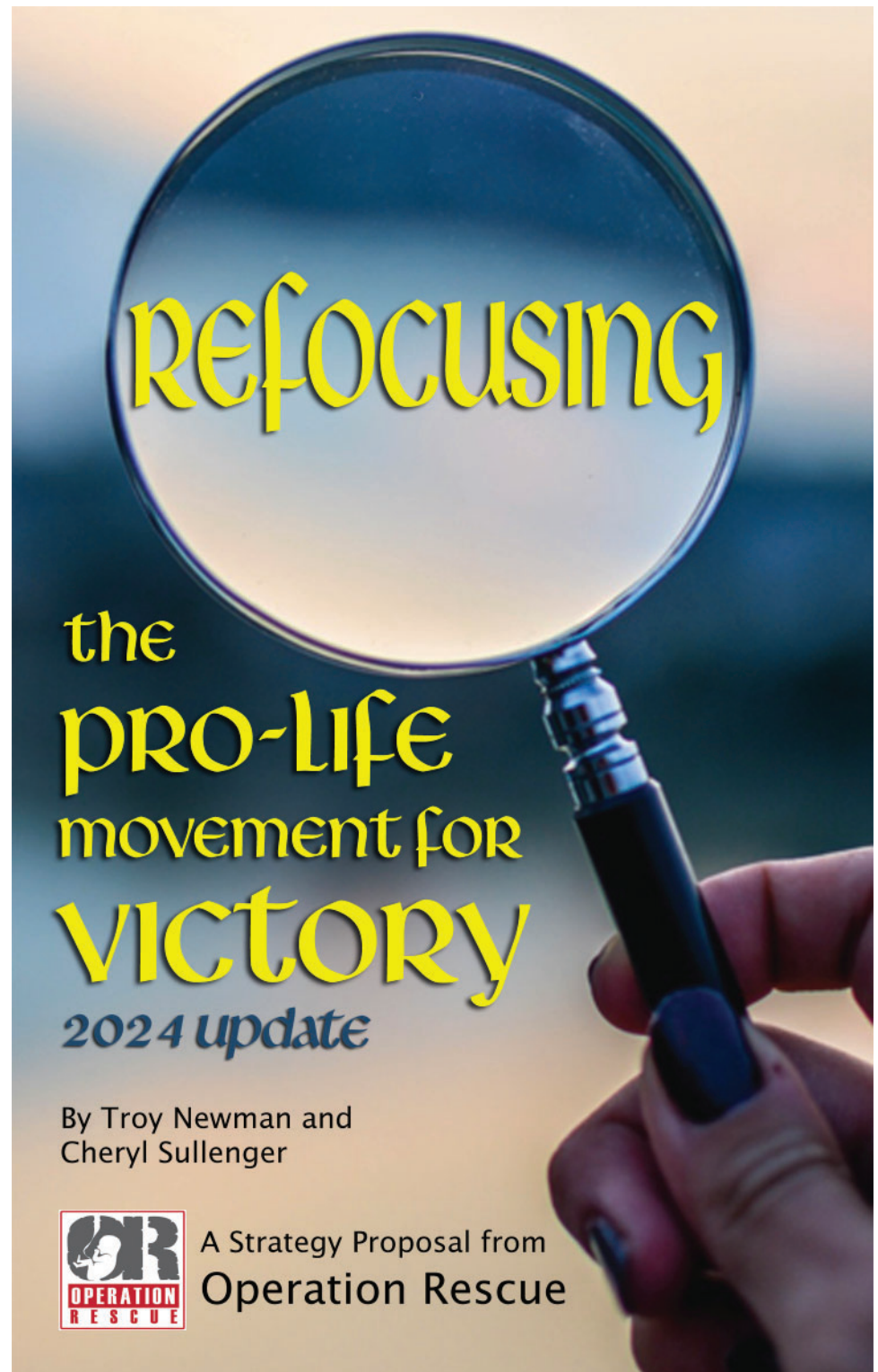


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# REFOCUSING

the  
pro-life  
movement for  
**VICTORY**  
*2024 update*

By Troy Newman and  
Cheryl Sullenger



A Strategy Proposal from  
Operation Rescue

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# REFOCUSING the pro-life movement FOR VICTORY

Shifting the Focus from  
*Weak* Pro-Life Arguments  
to the ***Strong*** Anti-Abortion Ground  
that Will Guarantee Future Victory



A Strategy Proposal from  
**OPERATION RESCUE**  
By Troy Newman and Cheryl Sullenger

## Refocusing the Pro-Life Movement for Victory

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## Preface

After the disappointing re-election of Barack Obama in 2012, we wondered what happened to the United States. It led us to do some serious soul-searching. We spent many hours researching and pondering what our movement had done, both right and wrong, over the previous decade and how we could get back on track toward victory for those imperiled children yet to be conceived. That process resulted in the publication of “Refocusing the Pro-Life Movement” for Victory in January 2013.

Our reflections and suggestions for refocusing our movement, along with a printed copy of this booklet, were presented by Troy Newman during meetings of pro-life leadership with great hopes that we would not repeat the losses experienced in that dreadful 2012 election.

There has been much water under the bridge since that first printing. There were the ensuing four dark years of Obama’s pro-abortion second term followed by four years of hope during the Trump Administration – the most pro-life in our country’s history. In 2020, we were stunned by the (dubious) election win of the radically pro-abortion team of Joe Biden and Planned Parenthood’s darling, Kamala Harris.

Thanks to President Trump’s appointment of three pro-life Supreme Court Justices, the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* overturned the landmark *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decisions on June 24, 2022 – seventeen months into the anti-life Biden Administration. That historic pro-life victory was followed by several devastating defeats at the ballot box as pro-abortion forces turned several states into pro-abortion bastions.

Those losses inspired Operation Rescue’s President Troy Newman to revisit our Refocusing strategy – now eleven years old – and found it to be as relevant today as it was in 2013. In fact, we found this plan is needed more urgently today than ever before.

Our goal for this updated presentation of our strategy is not to offend, but to give an honest and systematic evaluation of the facts that have brought us to our logical conclusions. These are our opinions, and we hope you will thoughtfully consider them as such. We left many of the original points intact but have included important updates to keep pace with the dynamic political environment of the 2024 election year.

We hope by sharing our thoughts with you, leaders who make up the heart and soul of the pro-life movement, we can begin a much overdue conversation that could lead us together into a place where victory for the pre-born is not only possible, but inevitable.

## Introduction

In 2012, the pro-life movement enjoyed a surge in pro-life sentiment. According to the 2012 Gallup poll, 51 percent of Americans identified as “pro-life” while only 41 percent identified as “pro-choice.” To the surprise of many who expected increased pro-life public sentiment to translate into political victory, Obama won re-election. More startling was the result of the exit polls that showed an overwhelming 58% of voters identified themselves as pro-choice as opposed to only 38% who claimed to be pro-life. Those exit polls were in direct contradiction of other pre-election day polling data.

In the wake of that election, we found that former presuppositions and assumptions did not hold true. Contrary to our beliefs and the polling data, the increasingly “pro-life” electorate, did not translate their “pro-life” identification into concurrent votes for pro-life candidates, legislation, and amendments. They voted instead against the true pro-life position and are still doing so today.

Why that happened, especially after the convincing victories of pro-life candidates in the 2010 mid-term elections, is a matter open for debate. It is our position that one major cause for the Election Day defection was the fact that the pro-abortion side was allowed to frame the debate on “wedge” issues such as contraception and rape. Pro-life supporters took the bait, and flooded to the field of battle on ground that was not of our choosing. *We waged war with our weakest and most unpopular arguments.* The high ground positions of the abortion issue, such as the documentable facts that abortion hurts women and inhumanely kills babies, were abandoned for the quagmire of debate on inconsequential issues



*Obama doubled-down on abortion in 2012*

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basic views and help them craft winning rhetoric on the issue of abortion. When there are gaffes, as there will always be, we must stand ready to jump in with support and refocus the public debate with a unified voice.

We must be willing to work with like-minded groups who want to push forward with a strategy to stop abortion. Unfortunately, a few groups and individuals have proven themselves to be obstructions to the process or believe that their way is the only one that is right and righteous. We cannot derail our efforts to cater to the obstructionists or naysayers, and we cannot allow successful tactics to be sidelined in obeisance to those who think that theirs is the only way.

We view pro-life groups that do not share our views and goals as being simply different members of the same body – not the enemy. We must cease from publicly and personally attacking those with whom we may disagree, or those who do not agree with us.

We are weary of those who can only bite and devour the brother next to them in the foxhole with such vigor that they have little energy left to be productive in the real battle. If those who insist on sowing discord and division are, in the end, ignored and isolated, it may encourage them to amend their ways.

Therefore, we propose a “coalition of the willing” of sorts. We seek cooperation and community with those who share a vision to work a unified plan to end abortion now, at this momentous time in history. We seek those who will help the movement refocus on our strengths in both the public square and the political realm. We seek to build a pro-life nation that is anti-abortion enough to take meaningful action to ensure our country becomes abortion free. This is the path toward ultimate victory for every baby.

such as “legitimate rape” where, depending on the exception for abortion, the polls show as much as 88% of the public disagreed.

The result was to alienate those who would self-identify as pro-life and drive them into the camp of those who stood diametrically opposed to the life position. The fact is that the public either (still) does not understand the intricate biology and facts surrounding conception due to rape, or they are swayed by the compassionate-sounding rhetoric espoused by the pro-choice crowd.

Eleven years later, that hard lesson that has still not been learned.

It may also be that “pro-life” has become too generic of a term if those who identify as such can cast their votes without hesitation for radical pro-abortion candidates and – even eleven years later – vote for ballot initiatives that protect and expand abortion. We have heard absurd claims in various articles that Planned Parenthood is pro-life and abortion itself is pro-life. If the term “pro-life” can be adopted by abortion clinics and pro-abortion politicians, then maybe it is time we refocus our arguments to be more “anti-abortion.”

It has been said numerous times that the definition of insanity is to repeat the same actions repeatedly expecting a different outcome. If that axiom is true, the pro-life movement may be standing at the precipice of a mental illness.

Time and again we gravitate to defend issues that the vast majority of Americans oppose. We have tried to force them to accept a campaign pledge to ban abortions for rape and incest, which account for less than one percent of all abortions. Yet, we have yet to convince them it is in everyone’s best interests to end abortions done on healthy babies for the unpopular sake of convenience. The movement cannot continue to fight the battle of rhetoric on the thinnest of ice in a manner that alienates our natural supporters.

The cases that comprise one percent of all abortions must be vigorously opposed in a way that will not endanger our ability to save the ninety-nine percent. We, as a movement, will never abandon the child conceived in rape and incest; however, when we lead with the argument against abortions in these difficult circumstances, we face a head wind of 83-88 percent<sup>1</sup> of the electorate blowing in our face.

*[Note: In this context, we are discussing election scenarios, not legislative ones.]*

When a pro-life leader or candidate for political office looks in the camera and says the baby conceived in brutal rape is “God’s

will,” they just lost 83%-88% of the electorate that support those exceptions – a good percentage of which would otherwise agree that abortion should be dramatically limited. This has the effect of handing a club to our adversaries so they can beat us over the head with it. It only drives our public support into the waiting arms of the enemies of Life.

President Trump has been criticized for embracing the abortion exceptions of “rape, incest, and the life of the mother” for the sake of winning elections. He understands that many people who identify as “Pro-Life” will defect to the other side at the ballot box if they believe abortion bans will be absolute. We believe he has a valid point from a political perspective, and recent ballot initiative losses bear that out.



***Therefore, once again, we suggest a change in thinking in our tactics. Our movement needs to take the public past the point of being “sentimentally pro-life” to being aggressively against abortion.***

There are many winning topics in our struggle for the protection of the pre-born child, and we must refocus the bulk of our efforts there to win back support that was alienated by the wedge issues in the past.

Certain abortion-related topics that are indefensible by the radical pro-abortion left. For instance, several years ago both pro-abortion Senator Barbara Boxer and Operation Rescue issued concurrent press releases condemning California abortionist Laurence Reich, who was caught raping young women who went to him for abortions. Both of us called for – and accomplished – the revocation of his privileges to practice medicine.

While that sounds like an anomalous occurrence, sex abuse at abortion clinics is far more widespread than people might think, and we could easily list about a dozen abortionists off the top of our heads that have been involved in this kind of documented perversion.

When searching for “common ground,” it’s hard to find anyone – pro-life or pro-choice – who supports so-called “doctors” raping vulnerable women who are drugged up for abortion procedures. **If we are going to talk about the matter of rape, this winning**

this fight. The only thing standing in our way of victory is failure to use this leverage to our greatest advantage.

At this point, we must address the two elephants in the room: election manipulation and media propaganda.

Ample evidence now exists to show that the 2020 Presidential Election was rigged in several ways, including government propaganda that favored the Democrat slate<sup>59</sup> and mail in voting that opened the door to ballot box stuffing.<sup>60</sup>

While some of the vulnerabilities in our election system have been addressed, there is still much reason to be concerned about the integrity of our elections. We recommend volunteering at the local level to become poll watchers so any irregularities can be noted and reported.

The mainstream media is another matter that is not easily addressed. It has become the unapologetic propaganda arm of the abortion cartel and its partner, the Democrat Party – and by extension, the corrupt Democrat-run censorship driven federal government. Ingenuity is required to bypass this messaging roadblock. We must continue to expose the dirty truth about abortion



abuses and the brutality of every abortion procedure – especially the unpopular second and third trimester variety – on innocent human beings at the most vulnerable stage of life. We must present our documentation carefully to silence the pro-abortion voices that would deny anything bad ever happens inside the doors of an abortion business.

As mentioned before, we cannot insanely continue to do the same things over and over and expect different results. We cannot chase after the wedge issues where we face a headwind of 88% of voters who are against us. We must remain focused on our strengths. Abortion is unpopular because it kills innocent babies and hurts women. Only a sliver of the population thinks that is a good thing. Abortion hurts people, and most Americans do not want people hurt. When we focus there, we have at least an opportunity to win.

We must work closer than ever with candidates that share our

*Pro-life messages are often censored by news and social media, especially if they reveal abortion abuses.*



When the pro-life side leads with their chin on the weakest of battle fronts, the pro-life arguments get knocked out every time. Recent polling data<sup>58</sup> shows the extreme headwind the pro-life community faces on the wedge issue “hard cases.” Approximately 75 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be legal for the “hard cases” such as rape and incest. This number is currently insurmountable under the current circumstances and political climate. Is it any wonder that the abortion cartel and far-left Democrats focus on the extreme cases and come out the victor every time?

Therefore, a shift in tactics must be undertaken to ensure future victories for the pre-born children. We certainly are not suggesting that the pro-life movement adopt an “exception” mentality. Those “hard issues” require more education, but not during a critical election cycle when it is guaranteed that the other side, in partnership with mainstream media amplification, will use every means possible to ensure that their voice is the loudest and most persuasive.

***What we are suggesting is that we realign our arguments to reflect our strengths upon which most Americans can agree.*** That is the way we will win over voters who naturally want to identify as pro-life.

There are **13 percent** of the people who believe that abortion should always be illegal. They will always vote pro-life. However, **34 percent** believe abortion should be legal in all circumstances, making our core support outnumbered at the ballot box. We must aggressively court the **51 percent** of the people in the middle, who believe that abortion should only be legal in certain circumstances. These people are already mostly with us, but we have lost them on the pro-abortion wedge issues. If we can gain their votes by appealing to strong positions on which have commonalities, we have a convincing margin for victory.

Let’s face it: Outlawing 98 percent of abortion will close 100 percent of the abortion mills. Similarly, William Wilberforce’s political strategy never actually abolished slavery, yet it decimated the slave trade in 1807.

When the pro-life movement combines compassion for the mother and child with a compelling case against abortion by using available facts and evidence in ways that resonate with most people, it will be an unstoppable power at the polls. We have the evidence, the messaging, the proper tools, and the moral high ground to win

### **position is where our focus should lie.**

Another area in which we have massive public support is around abortion negligence and malpractice. Abortionists routinely injure women then dump them at the local emergency rooms where they expect the hospital staff to figure out what happened and clean up their messes. Even groups such as the National Abortion Federation, an association of some of the dirtiest abortionists in the country, have thrown many an abortionist under the bus after a botched abortion garnered too much negative publicity.

These sorts of situations present themselves daily, and if we capitalize on them, we can flip the argument from a position of weakness to the winning arguments that focus on abortionists, most of whom are engaged in every seedy behavior from gross incompetence to the wholesale operation of criminal enterprises.

In 2015, the nation was shocked when the Center for Medical Progress dropped a series of explosive videos that revealed Planned Parenthood’s involvement in the barbaric practice of harvesting tissue and organs from aborted babies – some with still-beating hearts – for financial gain. That horrific revelation was a bridge too far for most Americans regardless of their position on abortion.

That project gave humanity back to the baby in the womb in the public’s mind for several months before the Planned Parenthood’s spin masters were able to demonize the citizen journalists, including Troy Newman, through political dirty tricks, media distortions, and punitive lawfare.

The pro-life movement needs to reshape the public’s opinion to be more anti-abortion. For the public, there is certainly nothing wrong, and perhaps something noble in opposing what amounts to human rights abuses at our nation’s abortion clinics. We must make the case repeatedly, that abortion is a terrible evil that must be abolished for the good of women and society. By focusing on our areas of strength, such as gruesome late-term abortions, unsanitary clinic practices, the sexual deviancy of the cartel, and the too-numerous-to-count botched abortions and deaths occurring at an epidemic rate, we will drive the electorate to conclude that abortion is neither safe nor needed. The pro-life movement must refocus its attention on building the case against a predatory abortion cartel and the barbaric taking of innocent human life, and in so doing, we may finally see public support for the “sanctity of human life” finally translate into true and lasting social and political change, even in the hard cases.

## When the Pro-Life Movement leads with its chin, we get knocked out!

In the past, the conservatives in the Federal government have worked to keep tax money from directly funding abortion and prompted a successful national debate on subjects such as partial-birth abortion and the horrifying baby parts trade. Except for the Supreme Court's 2022 *Dobbs* decision that returned the ability to limit or ban abortion back to the states, our greatest political accomplishments as a pro-life movement have occurred at the state level. That is now where we can best concentrate our efforts and where we can expect impactful victories for the foreseeable future.

After *Dobbs*, many states began to use their new authority to ban or severely restrict abortions. Today, there are fourteen states that have become abortion free, thanks to the pro-life Supreme Court Justices appointed by President Trump and forethinking state legislatures. Abortion supporters now find the lengthy process of using the courts to protect or restore abortion has been mostly unsuccessful in the post-*Dobbs* environment. However, they also discovered an Achilles' Heel. Since *Dobbs*, there have been abortion initiatives on the ballot in seven states. In each case, the pro-life position was soundly defeated.

There is a long history of failure in political endeavors that focus on the weak and unpopular issues related to abortion. When we allow the abortion crowd to define us and our positions on issues that drive wedges between us and our public support base, we lose every time. The fact that we have done the same thing over and over is an indicator that the pro-life movement is not learning from mistakes. It is time to change that.

First, we will look at the unlearned lessons leading up to the 2012 election, then examine the failed post-*Dobbs* ballot initiatives.

### Pre-2012 INITIATIVES

#### South Dakota lost by 12 and 10 percent



In 2006, South Dakota enacted a law effectively banning all abortions. The law was challenged by abortion-

## Path to Victory Found in Learning from Defeats

A well-intentioned pro-life group once put out a year-end e-mail that made justifications for why it did not accomplish the goals it set out for itself at the beginning of the year. In short, the group declared that it “stood up boldly for Truth, we were an unwavering voice for the voiceless. In the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, we are called to be faithful, not to be successful. Success is God’s alone.”

With all due respect for this fine organization, after over 50 years of child-killing in America, we can no longer settle for being “right” while the failure of our efforts results in the slaughter of innocent lives. Our mission is not to be morally superior; our mission is to be successful in saving every baby and ending all abortions.

Abortion is a brutal act of violence that kills a child. We simply do not have the liberty to settle for our piety when it comes to the matter of abortion. As a movement, we have a moral duty to end this holocaust. Every moment we delay means another child dead. We can no longer resign ourselves to excuses for our lack of success or waste our time on rabbit-trails and failed strategies.

Pro-life defeats and delays cannot be ignored if the pro-life movement is to obtain legal protection for every pre-born child. The movement must learn from its losses and refocus its messaging and means of communicating.

The movement once did a stellar job of improving the pro-life brand while diminishing what it means to be pro-choice. Frances Kissling, former president of Catholic for Choice once lamented, “The pro-choice brand has eroded considerably.”<sup>57</sup> However, in 2024, our “Pro-Life” brand has eroded and continues to decrease in popularity while the “Pro-Choice” brand is rising, especially when abortion is on the ballot.

More than ever, self-identified pro-life voters are casting their ballots for pro-choice positions. The abortion lobby successfully hammered a wedge between us and our supporters through the constant drumming that abortions for rape, incest, and life of the mother, are more the rule than the exception in the abortion debate. Since the *Dobbs* decision, our opposition has found that using the fear of a loss of freedom resonates strongly when used in political campaigns, as opposed to the pro-life emphasis on “bans” and “restrictions” – the opposite of “freedom.”

Today, slavery is practiced only in secret and is against the law around the globe, the fruit of a successful “anti” movement.

Anti-slavery abolitionism was an expressly “anti” movement; it was not a celebration of personal liberty, or the propagation of free societies.

## Depopulation and Failing U.S. Demographics



*Elon Musk*

People who do not care about babies in the womb may certainly care about their own futures. Abortion is a contributing factor to failing demographics<sup>54</sup> in the U.S. This is an issue that we can use to show how abortion is hurting our country, our pocketbooks, and our future prosperity.

Today, illegal immigration

is outpacing American births<sup>55</sup>, despite the mainstream media’s aggressive efforts to censor and “debunk” that fact. Even Elon Musk is warning our below replacement level reproduction rate and is urging families to have babies – and lots of them.<sup>56</sup> We will not get into the weeds of the demographics and depopulation agendas here but recommend that everyone familiarize themselves with this issue. It is likely to become an important talking point as our demographic situation degrades.

## “Anti” campaigns demonstrate that it is good to be against evil

Today, we are seeing a rise in the numbers of those who consider themselves “abortion abolitionists.” There is something appealing, especially to the younger generations, about working and sacrificing to alleviate human suffering by abolishing an evil in our world.

Being for something is nice, but it is completely acceptable and even noble to be against something as intrinsically wicked as abortion. Opposing an evil will not doom a movement to failure, but instead defines the depraved behavior and assists the opponents in eradicating the conduct.

supporting organizations and placed on the ballot for a public vote. The abortion ban lost 56 to 44 percent. Exit polls indicated it had a better chance of winning had it included exceptions for rape and life of the mother, i.e. the hard cases.

In 2008, pro-lifers put forth another amendment, but this time it included exceptions. To their surprise, the initiative again failed 55 to 45 percent.

During both elections, the pro-life side was vastly outspent by pro-abortion forces focusing on the extreme cases, calling it “a dangerous government intrusion into the private medical decisions that affect how doctors treat women.”<sup>2</sup>

Both ballot measures were also opposed by “hyper-purists,” a minority in the pro-life movement -- well intentioned but misguided people who think that it is immoral to stop 99% of the abortions if one percent is still allowed.

## California lost by 4, 8 and 6 percent

Three successive ballot initiatives were proposed in California in 2005, 2006, and 2008. The most recent was Proposition 4, the Abortion Waiting Period and Parental Notification Initiative, which was also known to its supporters as Sarah’s Law. It was on the November 4, 2008, ballot in California as a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment, where it was defeated 52 to 48 percent.<sup>3</sup> The detractors once again out-spent the pro-life forces by a wide margin and focused their arguments on wedge issues to bolster their arguments that abortion should be completely unrestricted. Those issues drove away support that rightfully should have been ours.



The previous measures met with identical opposition as Prop 4. Proposition 85 (2006) lost 54 to 46 percent and Proposition 73 (2005) failed 53 to 47 percent. The votes over the three election cycles only varied a meager two percentage points.

## Colorado lost by 46 and 41 percent

Amendment 48, the Colorado Definition of Person Amendment, appeared on the November 2008 ballot in Colorado as an initiated

constitutional amendment, where it was defeated 73 to 27.<sup>4</sup> In 2010, Colorado Fetal Personhood Amendment 62 was placed on the state ballot as another initiated constitutional amendment where it was defeated, 71 to 30.<sup>5</sup> Both amendments were opposed and out-spent by Planned Parenthood and the abortion industry. The opposition arguments targeted the “hard cases” and the “extreme” position of the amendment.

### **Mississippi lost by 16 percent**

A “Definition of Person Amendment,” also known as Initiative 26, appeared on the November 8, 2011, general election ballot in the state of Mississippi as an indirect initiated constitutional amendment where it was defeated 58 to 42 percent.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that nearly every state-wide office holder supported this initiative in a state that had the fewest abortions and was, at the time, one of only a handful of states with only one active abortion clinic.

Opponents, led by Planned Parenthood, attacked the amendment as “too extreme” and focused on the wedge issues of access to abortion for rape and incest victims. In addition, they launched a frontal assault on how the initiative would adversely affect access to birth control and in vitro fertilization. The attacks swayed much of the vote. Initiative 26 enjoyed the most favorable of all conditions that any pro-life initiative campaign could ever have desired. It was presented in a very conservative state during an off-year election with major celebrity endorsements and millions of dollars to spend. Nevertheless, the amendment failed by 16 percent.

### **Florida lost by 10 percent**

Amendment 6, also known as the Florida Abortion Amendment, was on the November 6, 2012, state ballot in Florida as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment where it was defeated 55-45 percent.

The proposed measure would have prohibited the use of public funds for abortions, except as required by federal law and to save the mother’s life. Additionally, the measure stipulated that the state constitution cannot be interpreted to include broader rights to abortion than those contained in the United States Constitution.<sup>7</sup>

Laws that deprive abortion clinics of tax dollars require that

“pro-clean air” issue. It was not a sterile lung strategy. That “Anti” crusade is quickly running a heavily regulated tobacco industry out of business.

### **Anti-Meat Campaign**

To buck a six-thousand-year tradition of human consumption of animal flesh, the anti-meat crusade has achieved remarkable results. The anti-meat coalition includes PETA, Earth First, Greenpeace, and many others. Although they regularly argue that mankind needs to treat animals more humanely, (pro-animal life), their mainstay reasoning is that meat is bad for the human body. Even the Beatles’ superstar, Sir Paul McCartney, once said that we ought to forgo our Thanksgiving turkey for the healthier “cruelty free” option of fruits and vegetables.<sup>53</sup>



PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, argue against animal cruelty. PETA has mainstreamed the graphic images of dogs and monkeys being used for medical experiments. You can hardly pick up your shampoo today without seeing a disclaimer that “no animals were harmed in the making of this product.”

The anti-meat crowd is “pro” the humane treatment of animals but is equally and unashamedly “anti” animal cruelty, and their success is something of which the pro-life movement should take note.

### **Anti-Slavery**

Notably, the anti-slavery abolitionist movement has impacted the direction of America more than any other grassroots advocacy group. Abolitionists fought against thousands of years of generational slavery. The anti-slavery movement used every possible tactic, including graphic images, books, editorials, petitions, marches, songs and so forth. The abolitionist heroes are too many to mention, yet each one of them decried the revolting practice of slavery.

anti-drinking and driving laws such as lowering the minimum blood alcohol levels and increased sobriety check points. But the single most important triumph has been to radically change public opinion against drinking and driving. It is no longer socially acceptable to “have one for the road.” As public perception and societal behaviors changed, legislative change followed.

Note: The anti-drinking and driving campaign are not a pro-sobriety crusade. MADD’s name says it all. They are against drunk driving.

### Anti-Smoking

The anti-smoking campaign might be one of the most successful of all American “anti” campaigns. Smoking was once something in which nearly everyone participated. In our founding era, it was customary practice for clergymen to be paid in tobacco. More recently, super stars and sports heroes advertised it. The likes of Phillip Morris and R.J. Reynolds once sold cigarettes as safe, luxurious, and sexy. What boy didn’t want to be the Marlboro Man when he grew up? Cigarettes were smoked on airplanes, in hospitals, and in restaurants. Newscasters smoked as they piped the news.



But what was once mainstream behavior is nearly taboo today. Cigarettes are banned in public places. Smokers are regularly vilified. Even the Center for Disease Control has stepped up to use grotesque pictures of smoking fatalities to discourage smokers from lighting up.

The anti-smoking campaign was propelled by thousands of documented tobacco-related deaths and illnesses. Smoking killed people. It was a revelation for the public.

The campaign fought uphill against multi-national, multi-billion-dollar corporate conglomerates deeply imbedded within the government. In the end, the anti-smoking crusade has achieved most of its goals and is gaining a head of steam to push for a complete ban on tobacco.

Obviously, the anti-smoking campaign was not cast as a

the clinics financially stand on their own. Prior to the 2020’s, the number of abortions were steadily decreasing. Abortion clinics were artificially kept open with the aid of tax dollars. Without that money, many would have been forced to close.

Opponents to Amendment 6 stressed that halting funding to abortion services would hinder women who are impregnated because of rape and incest and would impede or prevent vital health care options for women in life-threatening situations. In other words, the hard cases were once again trotted out to defeat pro-life legislation by 10 points.

Amendment 6 was also quietly opposed by the “hyper-purist” minority in the pro-life movement, for whom the defunding of abortion -- which -- would have closed a number of abortion clinics -- did not meet their standards of legislative perfection.

### 2012 SENATE SEATS

#### Missouri: A 26% swing against pro-life politicians

In 2012, Democrat Claire McCaskill’s Senate seat was deemed vulnerable<sup>8</sup> by early polling and likely to switch to Republican.



*This Esquire Magazine image is an example of how the pro-abortion media seized on the Akin rape comments to paint a negative picture of pro-life conservatives.*

McCaskill is a hard-core pro-choice advocate. She voted for every pro-abortion bill that came her way, including a vote to approve ObamaCare with all its abortion funding provisions.

Her opponent, Republican Congressman Todd Akin, was McCaskill’s opposite. He was as conservative and pro-life as they come. After a hard-fought primary election, Todd Akin emerged the victor much to the dismay of the Republican establishment, which preferred more moderate candidates.

Furthering the divide between Akin and McCaskill was the media’s obsession with his “legitimate rape” comment which defined the entire Senate race. Embarrassed by Akin, the Republican Party

threw him under the bus, withholding crucial funding and support. Although Mitt Romney carried the state of Missouri with a ten-point margin, Akin was soundly defeated 55 to 39 percent. The media fixation over the wedge issues of rape and incest abortions persuaded a full 26% of voters to swing to the other side and cast their ballots for the pro-choice McCaskill,<sup>9</sup> whose abortion views were diametrically opposed to those held by Romney, their presidential selection.

### **Indiana: a 10% swing against Pro-Life**

The 2012 Indiana Senate race followed a remarkably similar track to Missouri. Pro-choice Joe Donnelly ran head-to-head with staunch pro-life advocate Richard Mourdock. Indiana leaned pro-life, electing pro-life stalwart Mike Pence to the governor's office. Indiana flipped in the presidential election, switching their 2008 Obama vote to solid support for Romney (54 to 44 percent).



*Indiana's Richard Mourdock*

However, the Senate race in Indiana, as in Missouri, was defined by the hard cases in the matter of abortion. The remarks made by Mourdock, that the child conceived in rape was “part of God’s plan,” were played repeatedly by the press making this another race defined by the hard cases of abortion. Again, the Republican establishment ran from Mourdock, and he lost 50 to 44 percent. A convincing ten percent of voters cast their ballots for both pro-life Romney and pro-abortion Donnelly, splitting on the issue of abortions in the hard case of rape.

### **2012 Presidential Election: 16% Pro-Life Defeat**

President Obama won reelection over Mitt Romney 50.6 to 47.8 percent - a mere 2.8% difference. While the presidential campaign was dominated by the economy and foreign policy issues, abortion played an ever-present and influential role in the election outcome. President Obama clearly ran the first openly pro-choice presidential campaign, often mentioning his support for continued tax-funding of Planned Parenthood. This was a radical change

### **Case Studies in “Anti” successes**

It is a long-held axiom in the pro-life movement that we need to emphasize what we are for and not focus on what we are against. The abortion crowd uses the term anti-abortion as a pejorative and the pro-life side has always attempted to shift the debate away from this “anti” attack to being “pro”-life, “pro”-woman, and “pro”-baby. While this branding has worked to an extent in the past, we have already noted the confusion that exists when the “pro-life” term is used. Most who identify as “pro-life” have not taken the next step from simply liking cuddly babies in receiving blankets to real action to end abortion.

We posit that it is acceptable to keep the pro-life terminology and begin an anti-abortion campaign to re-shape the public’s opinion on abortion. The pro-life movement must always uphold a high standard for the sanctity of human life and be equipped to support women in difficult pregnancies while caring for every aspect of expectant mother care.

Nevertheless, it is equally essential to detail explicitly what the pro-life movement wants and what its main goal is: the abolition of abortion, which is currently an unpopular position. We must articulate a focused anti-abortion agenda without the nuances of the wide-focusing and often confusing pro-life philosophy. We are more than pro-baby. To be truly pro-life, we are, at our core, anti-abortion.

History shows that an “anti” campaign is not always a wrongheaded objective. In fact, defining what we are against clarifies exactly what we desire to achieve. Successful examples of “anti” campaigns are far ranging throughout history.

### **Anti-Drunk Driving**

Anti-drinking and driving campaigns have flourished in recent years. One such organization is Mothers



Against Drunk Driving (MADD), an organization that seeks to stop drunk driving and push for stricter alcohol legislation. The organization was founded in 1980 by a woman after her daughter was killed by a drunk driver. MADD has successfully helped shape

newspaper, and we might have seen different results in the Missouri Senate race.



*These filthy conditions were found at a Muskegon, Michigan abortion clinic on December 26, 2012. Conditions like this are common and indefensible by the abortion cartel.*

deserve better than Planned Parenthood and its troubling track record of killing and maiming women.”

Refocusing the messaging of the pro-life movement from defense to offense is not difficult. It can mean the difference between continued failures and victory. The abortion cartel and its proponents have no defense for the death of Tonya Reaves and other women killed by abortion. They sit in stone silence when confronted with the reality of ghastly late-term abortions used as “birth control.” None of the abortion pundits can defend the lowering of health standards for abortionists, as they have done in Illinois, New York, and elsewhere. Based on the reams of documentation that substantiates the argument that abortionists hurt women on an all-too-frequent basis, who can defend an effort to keep abortion dangerous?

When we stand on our strengths and refuse to be distracted by straw man arguments and red herrings, the other side simply cannot prevail.

The entire pro-life movement agrees with Congressman Mourdock’s position that every pre-born child, no matter the events surrounding the conception, is created in the image of God and deserves protection. But rather than give an answer that can be manipulated by the press, why not go on the attack? Like Yoest, Mourdock could have refused to answer the reporter directly and said instead, “The reality is that 98 percent of all abortions are done on healthy women with healthy babies, and I’m concerned that too many of these are done by ill-trained and shoddy physicians who are breaking the law. Women

from Obama’s 2008 campaign position that abortion was “above my paygrade,” which many people mistook for a pro-life position.

Mitt Romney ran as a pro-life candidate but was pigeonholed by the attacks from Obama and Planned Parenthood as the leader in the “War on Women.” Like the other ballot measures, amendments, and candidates, Romney was never able to defend himself adequately from these attacks, nor did he go on the offensive by detailing the legal and moral problems with abortion.

Exit polls showed 36% of the vote was cast by pro-lifers, opposed to 59% of voters who identified as pro-choice. Moreover, Rasmussen Reports released a survey<sup>10</sup> one week following the election that seemed to back up the exit polls, indicating that among actual voters only 38% were pro-life whereas 54% were pro-choice. These numbers are strikingly like the margins of defeat in several of the statewide races.

## **2012 Political Conclusions Still Apply**

Whether the votes are cast for an amendment, legislation, or candidates, the abortion crowd has been successful in distracting the public with wedge issues that tend to vilify the pro-life position as radical and even cruel. While pro-life politicians were reticent to fight on the delicate wedge issues, the pro-abortion crowd evoked fear in the minds of the electorate by leading them to think that they would be stripped of their birth control, denied access to fertility treatments, and that little girls will be heartlessly forced to carry their rapist’s children. This tactic by the pro-abortion crowd worked exceedingly well. Even President Obama’s 2012 presidential election manufactured the “war on women” to put forward the same arguments to successfully defeat Gov. Romney.

As pro-lifers, all too often we take the bait and run headlong onto the battlefield of the enemy’s choosing. The hard truth is that during the course of a political campaign, we will not successfully change the minds of the public on the topic of rape and incest abortions or any other aspect of the abortion issue where there is general public disagreement with our positions, at least not under the current conditions where the mainstream media jumps in to manipulate public opinion with their non-stop abortion apologetics tailor-made for the 83 to 88 percent<sup>11</sup> of the population.

Major pro-life initiatives have consistently failed to win a majority at the ballot box, even in the staunchest of pro-life states

like Mississippi and South Dakota, where the campaigns allowed the abortion side to frame the political debate. Voters are never really afforded an up or down vote on abortion. Instead, the vote becomes about the extreme cases of abortion where the pro-life side lacks its strongest support. Clearly, the pro-abortion advocates are better at tailoring their ads to achieve their desired results, with little, if any, pushback from our side. As Austin Ruse of CFAM, said “The hard cases are exactly where our enemies want to fight this battle.”<sup>11</sup> But that is exactly where we must decline the invitation to engage, at least during the election cycle.

## Post-*Dobbs* Ballot Measures

There is much to be learned from the seven ballot measures that handed the movement one defeat after the other since the *Dobbs* decision. Here are the details of the seven statewide measures that have so far faced the voters.

### Statewide Ballot Measures Since the June 24, 2022, *Dobbs* Decision<sup>12</sup>

**KANSAS:** No State Constitutional Right to Abortion and Legislative Power to Regulate Abortion Amendment (Value Them Both)



- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Legislatively referred Constitutional Amendment.
- **Election Date:** August 2, 2022
- **Purpose of Measure:** To overrule a misguided ruling by the liberal State Supreme Court that stated there was a right to abortion held within the State Constitution. It would have restored the normal reading and meaning to the constitution that in fact has no mention of abortion.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position: 58.97%  
Pro-life position: 41.03%  
Margin of victory: 17.94%
- **Winning Arguments:** This was the first ballot measure after *Dobbs* and gave abortion supporters the opportunity to

Live Action’s Mona Lisa Project<sup>51</sup> conducted a series of undercover stings where they were able to record Planned Parenthood clinics covering up child sex abuse. This project gained national attention and helped turn public opinion -- at least temporarily -- against Planned Parenthood.

There has been plenty of evidence gathered over many years to show a pattern of violations and make the case that abortion clinics do not report child sex abuse. Other than claiming that they were the victims of a “Gotcha” campaign, the abortion clinics have no defense for this chronic misbehavior. The non-reporting of abuse is a hill the pro-life movement can successfully fight on during political campaigns or when discussing other issues such as tax funding for abortion clinics, which is opposed by 53 percent of the people, as noted above.

## Taking the Offensive

The problems listed above are systemic to the entire abortion cartel. Taken as a whole or individually, these talking points are devastating to the proponents of abortion on demand. Furthermore, when these facts are mentioned in debates or public discourse, it silences the opposition.

Shifting focus away from the wedge issues to successfully debate the harm caused by abortion is what some pro-lifer leaders are already doing in clever ways. Charmaine Yoest, former President and CEO of American’s United for Life was highlighted in a November 2, 2012, *New York Times* article titled “Charmaine Yoest’s Cheerful War on Abortion.” The article noted that Mrs. Yoest refused to answer the reporters load question regarding Todd Akin because it would “carry water for the other side to redefine the issue.”<sup>52</sup> When the reporter pressed her, Yoest said rightly, “I’m not going to answer that...The minutiae of the rape exception is not where it’s at all.” She continued, “[The hard cases are] a distraction. It’s not relevant to the discussion.”

Imagine if Congressman Todd Akin answered the question on pregnancy due to rape like this: “Based on the evidence that Planned Parenthood covers for pedophiles and the fact that we have documented evidence that some abortion providers are convicted rapists, I would demand a full investigation into the circumstances of the conception and the abortion providers’ cover-up.”

It is doubtful that a quote like that would have made any



harassment, and abuse are commonplace in America’s abortion clinics. Too many abortionists prey on women at abortion clinics where there is less chance that their abusive behavior will be reported to the authorities. This is another issue that could build public outrage against the abortion cartel, yet it has not been fully exploited by the pro-life movement.

### Concealment of Child Sexual Abuse



*Abortionist Sherman Zaremski, like most abortionists, refused to report child rape*

Robert Estrada raped his two stepdaughters almost every night from the time they were 11 and 12 years old. When one of the girls became pregnant at the age of twelve, he brought her to Central Women’s Services, a run-down abortion mill in Wichita, Kansas, for an abortion by Sherman Zaremski. Zaremski gave the girl an abortion, then handed her back to Estrada, who continued raping them for another four long years – all because Zaremski never reported the suspected sex abuse.<sup>48</sup>

Estrada was eventually caught after the girls were referred to a pro-life pregnancy crisis center next door to the abortion clinic where one had gone seeking yet another abortion.

The pro-life center did report the abuse, and as a result Estrada is now serving a 35-year sentence. Zaremski later sued the state Attorney General to challenge the mandatory child abuse reporting laws, claiming that such reporting should be discretionary.<sup>49</sup>

This is just one of hundreds of accounts of abortion businesses covering up for child rapists. In 2002, Life Dynamics, Inc. conducted an undercover telephone investigation of over 900 Planned Parenthood and National Abortion Federation abortion clinics. Nearly all of the clinics told a caller, who identified herself as a 13-year old, that they would not have to tell anyone if she wanted an abortion, even though her boyfriend was said to be 24; or they coached the caller on how to avoid having the clinic report the suspected abuse.<sup>50</sup>

voice their negative reaction to it. There were claims on both sides that the ballot language was too confusing. “Don’t leave the future of abortion rights in Kansas to chance.”

### CALIFORNIA: Proposition 1, Right to Reproductive Freedom Amendment



- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Legislatively referred Constitutional Amendment.
- **Election Date:** November 8, 2022
- **Purpose of Measure:** To establish a right to “reproductive freedom,” which was defined to include a right to an abortion and to choose or refuse contraceptives.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position: 66.88%  
Pro-life position: 33.12%  
Margin of victory: 33.76%
- **Winning Arguments:** “California will not sit on the sidelines as unprecedented attacks on the fundamental right to choose endanger women across the country.”

### KENTUCKY: Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2, No Right to Abortion in Constitution Amendment

- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Legislatively referred Constitutional Amendment.
- **Election Date:** November 8, 2022
- **Purpose of Measure:** To state that nothing in the state constitution protects or secures a right to abortion or requires the funding of abortion.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position: 52.35%  
Pro-life position: 47.65%  
Margin of victory: 4.7%
- **Winning Arguments:** “Attack on reproductive freedom.” It would “take away right to bodily autonomy.” It was portrayed as a “blatant effort to take away Kentuckians’ fundamental rights and prevent individuals from making the health care decisions best for them and their families.”

**MICHIGAN:** Michigan Proposal 3, Right to Reproductive Freedom Initiative



- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Citizen initiated Constitutional Amendment
- **Election Date:** November 8, 2022
- **Purpose of Measure:** Make abortion a “Constitutional Right” in the State Constitution.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position: 56.66%  
Pro-life position: 43.34%  
Margin of victory: 13.32%
- **Winning Arguments:** Campaign rhetoric defined “reproductive freedom” as “the right to make and effectuate decisions about all matters relating to pregnancy, including but not limited to prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, sterilization, abortion care, miscarriage management, and infertility care.”

**MONTANA:** LR-131, Medical Care Requirements for Born-Alive Infants Measure

- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Legislatively referred state statute.
- **Election Date:** November 8, 2022
- **Purpose of Measure:** State that infants born alive at any state of development are legal persons, require medical care to be provided to infants born alive in any situation, including abortions, and establish maximum penalties of \$50,000 fine and/or 20 years in prison for anyone violating the law.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position: 52.55%  
Pro-life position: 47.45%  
Margin of victory: 5.1%
- **Winning Arguments:** “This one size fits all legislated standard of care not only interferes with medical practice but denies physicians the ability to provide care that is necessary, compassionate, and appropriate to an individual woman’s circumstances.”

Brian Finkel<sup>42</sup>. In 2004, he was sentenced to 35 years in prison for raping and otherwise sexually abusing his patients. During his trial, nearly ninety women came forward with 53 testifying of their abuse at his clinic which he openly referred to as the “Vaginal Vault.” Thankfully in 2006, Finkel lost an appeal and will not be eligible for parole until he has served 20 years.



*Abortionist and rapist Brian Finkel does the perp walk.*

Finkel is certainly not the only abortionist to have crossed sexual boundaries.

California abortionist Laurence Reich<sup>43</sup> was convicted of sexually abusing his abortion patients in the 1980’s. He resurfaced in the 1990’s, working for illegal abortionist Bertha Bugarin. Pleas to the Board of Osteopathy to ban him from the practice of medicine fell on deaf ears. As predicted, Reich was again caught and convicted of sex abuse against his abortion patients in 2005 and was forced to surrender his license in April 2006. During a 2007 raid on Bugarin’s abortion chain in Los Angeles County, Reich was found by police defiantly working as an abortionist even though he had not had a medical license for over a year.

Maryland abortionist Harold O. Alexander’s medical license was suspended on July 31, 2012, for a number of violations, including making “sexually inappropriate comments” about patients’ breasts during their abortion procedures and prescribing Viagra to several friends who were not his patients.<sup>44</sup>

In Portland, Registered Nurse Evett Gradwohl was ordered to stop practicing<sup>45</sup> after another employee filed a suit<sup>46</sup> against the Lovejoy Surgical Center where Gradwohl reportedly fondled patients’ breasts while they were under anesthesia and sexually harassed other employees. Gradwohl’s case was referred to the Portland Police Department for investigation into her criminal conduct.<sup>47</sup>

We could go on. Operation Rescue has received countless reports from former clinic workers indicating sexual deviancy,

## Financial Malfeasance and Tax Funding

The media does not really care if abortion clinics are killing babies or if they are unsanitary, dangerous places, but if clinics are engaged in financial malfeasance, suddenly, that gets everyone's attention.

There are plenty of cases that can be referenced, especially regarding Planned Parenthood.



Whistleblower suits filed by former Planned Parenthood employees in California<sup>35</sup>, Texas<sup>36</sup>, and Iowa<sup>37</sup> allege massive billing fraud. According to these

cases, Planned Parenthood is bilking taxpayers out of millions of dollars per year in over-billing and billing for services never rendered.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America disaffiliated its entire Golden Gate operation after evidence of financial mismanagement and malfeasance reached the mainstream media.<sup>38</sup>

The results of a Knights of Columbus/Marist poll, published on January 25, 2024, showed that 53 percent Americans oppose tax funding of abortions at U.S abortion facilities. When it comes to our tax dollars funding abortions in foreign countries, strong opposition rose to a whopping 67 percent.<sup>39</sup>

On the issue of how much abortion costs the U.S., a 2022 House Ways and Means Report<sup>40</sup> announced that abortion costs the American economy an unfathomable \$6.9 trillion, or about 32 percent of our country's GDP.

These are winning issues just waiting for the pro-life movement to exploit.

## Sexual Deviancy within the Abortion Cartel

Abortion clinics are magnets for sexual predators.<sup>41</sup> They provide an environment where abusers can access vulnerable victims where a cloak of secrecy already exists. Sexual predation and abuse at abortion clinics is more widespread than most people realize. This is the abortion cartel's dirty little secret.

The poster boy for sexual deviancy was Arizona abortionist

## VERMONT: Vermont Proposal 5, Right to Personal Reproductive Autonomy Amendment

- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Legislatively referred Constitutional Amendment.
- **Election Date:** November 8, 2022
- **Purpose of Measure:** To amend the Vermont Constitution to add language protecting the right to personal reproductive autonomy and prohibiting government infringement.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position – 76.77%  
Pro-life position – 23.23%  
Margin of victory – 53.54%
- **Winning Arguments:** Instilled fear that the “freedom” to make “essential healthcare decisions” could be curtailed or eliminated.

## OHIO: Issue 1, Right to Make Reproductive Decisions Including Abortion Initiative



- **Type of Ballot Measure:** Citizen initiated Constitutional Amendment.
- **Election Date:** November 7, 2023
- **Purpose of Measure:** To establish a state constitutional right to “make and carry out one’s own reproductive decisions,” including decisions about abortion, contraception, fertility treatment, miscarriage care, and continuing pregnancy.
- **Outcome:** Abortion position – 56.78%  
Pro-life position – 43.22%  
Margin of victory – 13.56%
- **Winning Arguments:** “Our common sense amendment will restore the rights and protections that were destroyed when *Roe* was overturned. It will preserve the doctor-patient relationship and empower all people to make their own reproductive health care decisions without interference from the government, lobbyists and politicians.”

## Messaging, Media, and Money

There are many other statistics that could be explored to explain these pro-life losses more deeply, but the above information is adequate to make the necessary point.

Pro-abortion political campaigns continue to dominate the ballot box. The reasons for this are clear.

**Messaging:** As in 2012, their messaging continues to focus on hard cases, with a new wrinkle. In 2022-2023, the theme of lost freedoms dominates. This is an appeal to the fear emotion, with little focus on scientific facts or even logic. However, this messaging appeals to most Americans, including many of those who identify as “pro-life” but are worried that women may suffer or die if abortion is not available in hard cases, such as rape, incest, or fetal anomalies.

***In a nutshell, fear sells.***

**Media:** The mainstream is committed to defending abortion at all costs. They amplify the abortion arguments while demonizing or mocking pro-life positions. There is no such thing as an unbiased media anymore when it comes to abortion, if such a thing ever existed. Pro-life campaigns struggle to overcome the uneven playing field that has been created by the ever-beating drum of media propaganda that drowns out all other viewpoints. Our best messaging simply cannot compete with this.

**Money:** Often, blame for pro-life losses is attributed to having been outspent by the other side. On the contrary, the side with the most money does not always win. For example, in the Kansas “Value them Both” campaign, both sides spent about the same amount of money, according to campaign finance records examined by Operation Rescue.

Today, many pro-lifers continue to believe that if we just do the same things we have always done, only with more money and passion, we will eventually win elections. That thinking is why we continue to lose.

## Pro-life vs. Pro-choice

Since 1996, Gallup has consistently polled people on how they self-identify with the terms “pro-choice” and “pro-life” (Chart 1). In 2012, the pro-life position enjoyed 50 percent support while the pro-choice side lagged by nine percentage points. However, polling in 2023 showed that the *Dobbs* decision had a profound negative effect on how Americans identify on abortion.

supporter of abortion rights stated regarding Bugarin, “This criminal preyed on women in the Hispanic community and has now been held accountable. By passing herself off as a doctor, she put these women’s lives in danger.”<sup>29</sup>

In Hyannis, Massachusetts, abortionist Rapin Osathanondh<sup>30</sup> was sentenced to jail for killing Laura Hope Smith during an abortion in a facility with inadequate emergency equipment and staffing. Osathanondh later purchased a crash cart and backdated the paperwork to make it appear that he had it on hand at the time of Smith’s abortion.

District Attorney Michael O’Keefe noted that Osathanondh’s actions amounted to “willful, wanton, and reckless conduct.”<sup>31</sup>

Among the most egregious of cases, as previously mentioned, was that of Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell, who was convicted of first-degree murder for killing a patient and several babies<sup>32</sup> that had been born alive during his horrific abortion procedures. Also arrested were nine of his employees, three of whom were charged with murder.

Conditions and practices at his Women’s Medical Society were so appalling that a voluminous

281-page grand jury report described Gosnell’s operation as a “criminal enterprise” and petitioned for the death penalty.<sup>33</sup>

The gruesomeness of Gosnell’s heinous late-term abortion business shocked America. The National Abortion Federation put as much distance as it could between the organization and Gosnell. It also rescinded the membership of two Delaware clinics associated with him, which were later forced to close.<sup>34</sup>

When talking about the criminal conduct of abortionists and their abuses of women, the pro-life movement stands on solid ground. The abortion cartel’s degenerate conduct is impeccably documented. There is no defense or excuse or hard case that can justify the crimes perpetrated by abortionists. This is an issue where we win, hands down.



*Rapin Osathanondh in cuffs.*

In 2013, autopsy photographs depicting 18-year-old Marla Cardamone’s dead body splayed out on a coroner’s table were released by Life Dynamics, Inc.<sup>27</sup> She had been killed at a Pennsylvania abortion clinic during a botched procedure. The photos are heart-wrenching. We predict utter silence from the abortion cartel in response to the public outrage these photos are sure to elicit.

The public, however, does not take kindly to abortionists who maim and kill women at substandard abortion mills, but these are facts that the abortion cartel was successfully able to keep from the public during previous election cycles by focusing the public debate on issues that were more akin to a tempest in a teapot.

### Criminal Activity by Abortion Providers

Much has surfaced regarding the criminal conduct of abortion providers.

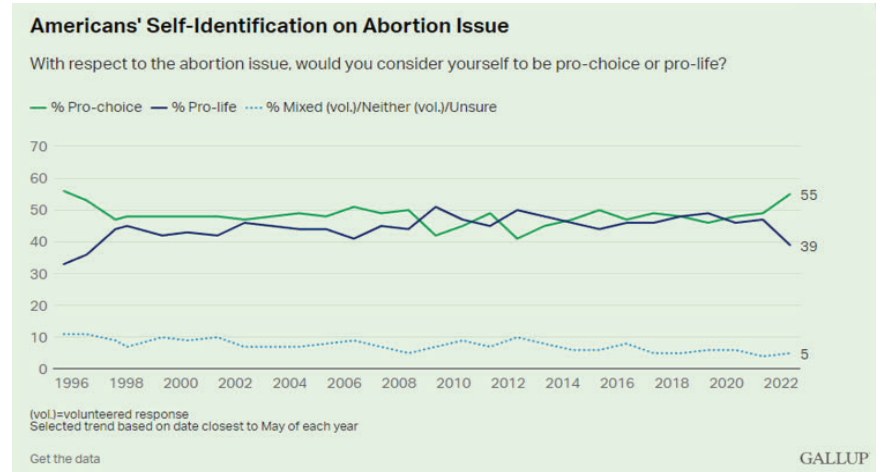


*Bertha Bugarin*

In 2008, the shocking story broke of California abortionist Bertha Bugarin’s arrest<sup>28</sup> in Los Angeles and San Diego Counties for illegal abortions and practicing medicine without a license. Bugarin ran what one reporter called a “house of horrors,” where she would personally perform abortions in her six Southern California abortion clinics when no other abortionist was available, even though she had no medical training or background. Bugarin employed the worst of the worst abortionists in the field, many of whom lost their medical licenses amid a spate of botched abortions and abortion deaths. Upon Bugarin’s conviction, her abortion clinic chain collapsed.

San Diego District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, an openly avowed lesbian and staunch

**Chart 1**

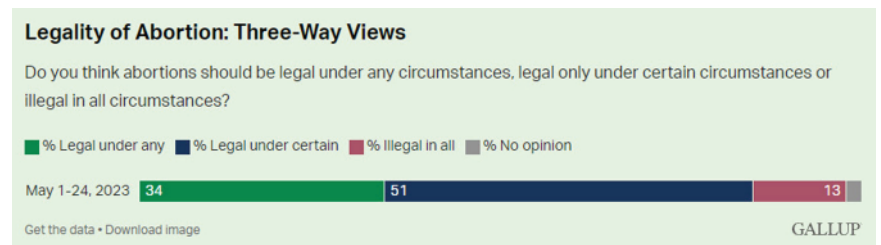


According to Gallup’s 2023 poll, those who identify as “pro-life” dropped to 39 percent while support for the “Pro-Choice” position rocketed to a “near record high” of 55 percent. Since *Dobbs*, it is now unpopular to be considered “Pro-Life.”

When digging down a bit further, an interesting dynamic is revealed.

In 2012, the absolutist positions of support for “illegal in all circumstances” and “legal under any circumstance” stood at 20 percent and 25 percent respectively. Usually, these positions change very little over time. However, in May 2023, there was a major shift with only 13 percent supporting the pro-life “illegal in all circumstances” position, while support for “legal under any circumstance” increased to 34 percent support. (Chart 2) This represents the largest change in the absolutist positions in the last 36 years, (other than during the anomalous Rescue Movement years).

**Chart 2**



Those who think abortion ought to be legal “under certain circumstances” have remained mostly unchanged from 2012 to 2023 notwithstanding *Dobbs*. This mushy middle position is in a clear majority at 52 percent in 2012 and 51 percent in 2023. ***It is this demographic group that tends to lean “pro-life” in identity but votes pro-choice for several reasons that abortion promoters successfully exploit.***

In analyzing the two charts, an interesting fact emerges. When we add people who believe abortion should be “illegal in all circumstances” to those who think it should be legal “under certain circumstances” we see that 64 percent of the public want significant changes to the law that would dramatically restrict abortion. While that combined percentage is down from 2012’s high water mark of 72 percent, most Americans still embrace the overall pro-life position.

Obviously, there is good news and bad news in this statistic. We still hold most of the public opinion but are rapidly losing ground. There remains a terrible amount of confusion as to what exactly “pro-life” means. A true pro-life position holds every child, no matter of the conception circumstances, is a unique human being deserving the same human rights and dignity as born individuals. The true pro-life position is to end abortion — all abortion — without exception. Yet, many who say they are “pro-life” are willing to allow abortions in limited circumstances, such as rape and incest.

This means that a good deal of absolutist pro-life rhetoric is alienating the very electorate that could ensure victory.

In his November 8, 2012, LifeNews.com opinion piece titled, “Exit Polling Data Shows Pro-Lifers Failed to Vote Pro-Life<sup>13</sup>,” Steven Ertelt makes observations that are as instructive now as they were eleven years ago.

“Despite the breakdown, exit polling data shows just 36 percent of voters who showed up to the polls took a pro-life position supporting making all or most abortions illegal while 59 percent took a pro-abortion position favoring keeping all or most abortions legal.”

Ertelt continued, “The disconnect in the numbers mean one of a number of things happened: a) pro-life voters did not turn out in the same numbers as abortion advocates, b) pro-life voters went to the polls and either voted for a third-party candidate or did not vote in the presidential election, or c) pro-life voters supported the most pro-abortion president in history.”

Maternal deaths from abortions are voluntarily reported to the Centers for Disease Control and are undependable since abortionists tend to minimize or even cover up abortion deaths. This suspected underreporting trend has become even more problematic in recent years.

Publicity about women who have perished due to botched or incompetent abortions can help frame the argument that abortion is not safe. For example, Tonya Reaves<sup>24</sup> died on July 20, 2012, as the result of a botched second-trimester abortion at a Chicago Planned Parenthood. Just days after Reaves’ tragic death, President Barack Obama hit the campaign trail and told the American people that defunding Planned Parenthood was a “bad idea.” He mentioned that Planned Parenthood offered mammograms to poor women, which is simply not true, diverting attention away from Reaves tragic death and shifting the pro-lifers working to defund Planned Parenthood to the defense.<sup>25</sup> Pro-lifers never fully seized the opportunity to blast Obama for his heartless unconcern for the plight of Ms. Reaves or for the child left orphaned after Planned Parenthood was finished with her. It was a golden opportunity squandered.

In contrast, a 19-year-old Texas teen named Christin Gilbert<sup>26</sup> died in 2005 from a botched third-trimester abortion in Wichita, Kansas, with a vastly different response. Pro-life groups led by Operation Rescue successfully publicized Gilbert’s death and demanded accountability for those responsible, even to the point of convening a citizen-called grand jury to investigate any criminal conduct. Even Bill O’Reilly took up the cause, commenting frequently on the subject of late-term abortions on his popular Fox News program.



*Christin Gilbert*

While those responsible for Gilbert’s death eluded justice, her death helped vilify late-term abortions and turn public opinion against the abortion clinic. It laid the groundwork for a stream of pro-life legislation that flooded the Kansas Statehouse once the political conditions became favorable after the mid-term elections in 2010.

“Steve Brigham is a substandard provider and should not be practicing medicine or running an abortion clinic anywhere in the United States,” Saprota said. “He should definitely be put out of business. No question about that.”<sup>17</sup>

Polls show that an overwhelming majority (64 percent) “Exit Polling Data Shows Pro-Lifers Failed to Vote Pro-Life.”<sup>18</sup> of the American people oppose abortions after the first trimester, especially if the grisly partial-birth abortion procedure is involved.

When we talk about late-term abortions, illegal abortion, botched abortions, and other abortion abuses that are rampant throughout the abortion cartel, we win the argument in a resounding fashion.

A more dramatic case was that of Kermit Gosnell,<sup>19</sup> who was convicted of three counts of first-degree murder in 2013 for snipping the necks of babies who were born alive during late-term abortions at his filthy West Philadelphia abortion mill. That case, on which Operation Rescue heavily reported, led to national public outcry from both pro-life and pro-abortion advocates and resulted in the passage of pro-life laws in several states.<sup>20</sup>

## Abortion injuries and deaths



*Tonya Reaves*

Botched abortions are more common than the average person thinks. Abortion clinics are landing women in hospital emergency rooms as well as the morgues at an alarming rate. There is little defense for this kind of carnage.

Just in 2019, Operation Rescue documented over one hundred medical emergencies at abortion clinics around the nation<sup>21</sup>, and that is only a peek through the keyhole. We can only see a small fraction of what really goes on in an industry that conducts its chronically abusive practices under an impenetrable shroud of secrecy.

Operation Rescue has documented hundreds of abortion injuries at abortion facilities that have resulted in emergency hospitalization and nearly 30 abortion-related maternal deaths.<sup>22</sup> Many of these documented tragedies have resulted in closed abortion clinics, loss of medical licenses, and even a few cases of imprisonment.<sup>23</sup>

Judging from the Gallup polling data above, the answer to Ertelt’s question is clearly “c.” Americans who identify themselves as pro-life are successfully targeted by pro-choice marketing on the hard case exceptions that comprise a miniscule number of abortions each year. This targeting of pro-life supporters on wedge issues has convinced a huge percentage to vote pro-choice. Add to that the post-*Dobbs* pearl-clutching rhetoric that claims pro-life laws represent a loss of freedom, autonomy, and “healthcare” options, it is no wonder that we cannot win at the ballot box.

The sad fact is that when a voter casts a ballot for someone like the rabidly pro-abortion Claire McCaskill over staunchly pro-life candidate like Todd Akin because they want abortion legal in the case of rape, we end up getting not only a rape exception, but every other abortion as well. In this way, the pro-abortion political tactics of forcing pro-life campaigns to defend unpopular positions to the detriment of the pro-life cause.

That trend has taken root and fully blossomed in the post-*Dobbs* ballot initiative era.

When a red state like Montana votes 53 percent in favor of denying medical care to babies born alive under any circumstances, (not just during abortions), we can see that our messaging is not resonating with the public, or not reaching them at all. Our political failure to define and communicate the issues effectively is costing lives and will continue to do so until something changes.

Adding to the confusion over the “pro-life” label, some abortion advocates are stealing the pro-life term and applying it to the defense of abortion services. An article posted in 2012 on liberationnews.org led with the headline, “Defending Access to Abortion is Pro-life.”<sup>14</sup> The first sentence said, “The life of a child is precious. The life of a woman is equally precious.” The authors then went on in an 833-word rant supporting abortion. Even Peter Brownlee, then the CEO at Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri, once quipped at a press conference that everything Planned Parenthood does is “pro-life.”

Identifying oneself as “pro-life” does not translate into a successful effort to abolish abortion. Pro-choice and pro-abortion advocacy groups continue to exploit the confusion to our detriment, turning well-intentioned “pro-life” people into a pro-choice voting bloc that have doled out defeats for over a decade that have confounded the pro-life community.

## Issues that Guarantee Victory

Even though the pro-abortion/pro-choice supporters have been successful at neutralizing our positions and manipulating otherwise pro-life supporters into voting pro-choice, there are many reasons to believe that being pro-life can succeed on its own merits. While “pro-choice” may sound compassionate, abortion itself is not popular. Even Hillary Clinton, a staunch abortion advocate and participant, once said abortion is “a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women.”<sup>15</sup>

An SBA List memo sent out in November 2012 contained an insightful statement.

“The abortion lobby and their allies know from hard polling data and polling trends that abortion is not a winning issue for them. They have figured out how to win the abortion debate: Don’t make it about abortion.”

Abortion itself is an ugly and painful stain on the lives of every person it touches and that is why the pro-choice crowd uses every euphemism possible to define it in ways that deflect attention from its barbarity. The painfulness of abortion is also why the cartel uses every extreme “hard case,” fictitious or otherwise, to support continued unregulated abortion.

It has been said that hard cases make bad laws. However, pro-life advocates prevail when the argument shifts from the hard cases that comprise just one to two percent of all abortions to the unpopular reality of over 90% of all abortions are done on healthy babies for the sake of convenience and abortion industry profit.

Additionally, there are numerous compelling arguments against abortion that can be made, which the public overwhelmingly supports. These same points often leave the abortion crowd in stunned silence, or in a place where they are compelled to echo our concerns and ally themselves with our position.

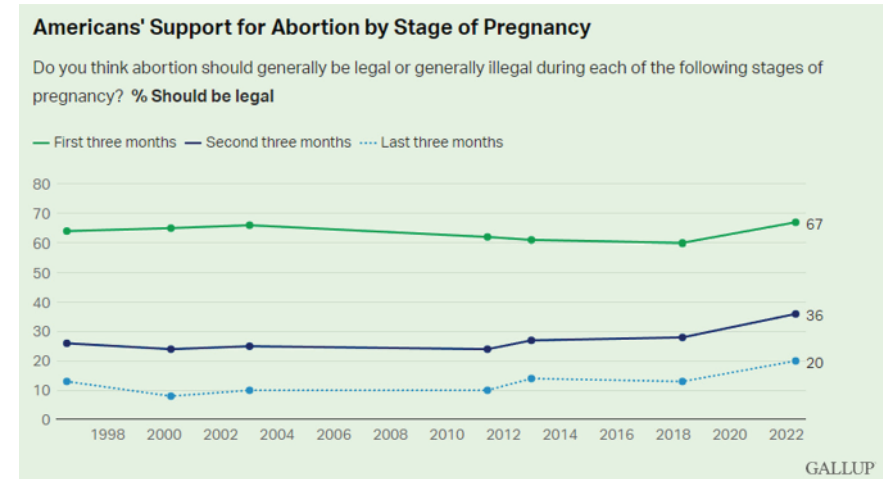
### Late-term Abortions

According to Gallup polling, abortions in the second and third trimesters are extremely unpopular and pose an opportunity for the pro-life side to frame a winning argument.

In May 2023, Gallup stated, “When asked about the legality of abortion at different stages of pregnancy, about two-thirds of Americans say it should be legal in the first trimester (69%), while

support drops to 37% for the second trimester and 22% for the third. Majorities oppose abortion being legal in the second (55%) and third (70%) trimesters.”<sup>16</sup>

Chart 3



One example is the case of Steven Chase Brigham, a late-term abortionist from New Jersey, who was operating a secret and very shady bi-state abortion enterprise with his cohort, Nicola Riley. That was discovered when the pair nearly killed a patient during a late-term abortion in Maryland where Brigham has never held a medical license. Police raided the secret Elkton clinic and discovered the bodies of several late-term, viable babies in a bloody freezer. The pair were charged with murder and jailed for weeks. Eventually, the prosecution was forced to drop the charges after a key witness declined to testify. However, Brigham’s grisly practices could not be defended by the abortion cartel.



Steven Chase Brigham in his Camden Co. New Jersey mug shot

Even Nancy Saporta of the National Abortion Federation, who has been known to embrace and defend the worst abortionists in the country, threw Brigham under the bus.