

Spring 2024

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter and happy Spring!

First, I want to share that we had a reported four turn-aways during our Spring 40 Days for Life Campaign. That included both the efforts of our Sidewalk Counseling team and participants in 40 Days for Life, and it reflects the results that were reported back to us.

We also experienced a situation where a local charitable care organization with a life-affirming mission was observed transporting a patient to the Planned Parenthood location. Because of the prayerful presence of 40 Days participants, we were immediately able to connect with the organization to inquire about the situation (and we learned that the patient had intentionally deceived the employee who had already reported it to her supervisor). All of this was made possible because of the faithful and fruitful presence of our sidewalk team and those who came out for 40 Days for Life.

This kind of prayerful community presence is going to be all the more necessary as we move into the future of abortion policy here in the State of Ohio. On that front, it has been a very busy few months as well. In early March, it was announced that Walgreens and CVS locations across the country would start to distribute the abortion pill regimen. Company spokespersons indicate that for now, the abortion pill would not be distributed in Ohio as current Ohio law requires that only physicians provide it, although this provision could be eliminated by litigation post Issue 1. Certainly, there has been much discussion on the abortion pill, as in late March the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in an appeal by the FDA on a case brought by the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine (AHM), a group of life-affirming healthcare professionals and patients who have been harmed by the abortion pill regimen. The case questions if the FDA followed the proper process for approving changes to the abortion pill protocol, or if it cut corners in a politically-driven agenda putting patients at risk. Anticipate a decision in the case sometime before the Court term ends in June.

On the litigation front, this is not the only lawsuit impacting pro-life laws. Midday on Good Friday, the ACLU and a group of Ohio abortion providers filed a lawsuit in Franklin County arguing that Ohio's informed consent and waiting periods before an abortion violate the provisions of Article 1, Section 22 (aka Issue 1). There has also been some additional legal process in separate litigation related to Ohio's Heartbeat Law.

We are working to ensure that we respond to the changes in Ohio's laws after Issue 1's passage. For example, we've launched our "Love Always Wins" campaign, which you can learn more about in this newsletter. We are also going to be undergoing some organizational reorganization and growth.

If you have not yet already heard, we are undertaking a search for a new Executive Director at GCRTL. In the coming weeks and months, I will transition first to the role of fractional Executive and then President of GCRTL, and I'll be reducing my hours here. This news brings with it mixed emotions for me, and perhaps for many of you.

Since 2013, it has been my honor and privilege to work with the team at GCRTL in the role of Executive Director, and I have seen so much growth in that time, both personally and for the organization and our community. To be very clear, I am not planning to leave GCRTL. I will eventually be transitioning to the role of President, where I will be tasked by our Board to invest in and develop our next ED while focusing on broader strategy, external affairs, development, and public policy. This will also allow me to pursue some other projects that I am passionate about while also allowing the organization to grow in a way that is financially responsible—we take stewardship of donor dollars very seriously.

I am inviting your help in three very concrete ways. The first is to help us to identify someone who is passionately pro-life and would like to work with me, our existing team, and our leaders to grow our pro-life community in a rapidly changing world. The second is to give us, and especially me, a little extra grace as we work through the internal transitions. I love being available to our volunteers and donors, but I may be a little more delayed in the coming weeks. Third, of course, is to continue praying for me and all who work in this field. I know I would not be here today if it were not for your friendship and your prayers.

Always for Life,

*Beth J. Vanderkooi*

## Ohio Abortion Litigation

The ACLU, along with Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other abortion providers, filed a lawsuit on Good Friday challenging Ohio's abortion laws, particularly focusing on the informed consent and 24-hour waiting period required after patients receive state-mandated information in person before they can proceed with an abortion.

The lawsuit, filed in Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, argues that these restrictions violate the newly amended Ohio Constitution's right to reproductive freedom, which was passed on November 7, 2023. This amendment enshrines the explicit and fundamental right to abortion, forbidding the state from interfering with access to abortion and discriminating against abortion patients and providers.

The case contends that the waiting period and other restrictions force patients to make unnecessary additional trips to health centers and creating a burden on efforts to provide or access abortions. They argue that these laws lack any health benefit or medical justification, instead only serving to delay care and impose distressing and stigmatizing information on patients. The lawsuit seeks to have these restrictions declared unconstitutional under Ohio's right to reproductive freedom.

Pro-life advocates of course emphasize that it is standard procedure for patients to obtain in-person informed consent before medical procedures. Waiting periods also protect patients. At least three out of every five women who have an abortion later report that their abortion was under coercion or pressure. Part of Ohio's informed consent laws require abortion clinics to ensure that patients have some protection from coercion by requiring that they meet with a physician alone, that clinics post a warning that no one can force a woman to have an abortion, and that women who are considering abortion be given an opportunity to learn about the development of their baby, see their ultrasound if one is performed, and have information on resources about parenting.

However, it is very possible, and some might say likely, that these patient-protecting measures will be struck down under the intentionally broad language written and inserted into Ohio's Constitution last fall. Pray, Ohio.

## Push for Assisted Suicide Continues to Grow Across U.S.

The legalization of assisted suicide represents a troubling shift in societal values towards the sanctity of life and medical ethics.

As of March 2024, 11 jurisdictions (CA, CO, DC, HI, ME, MT, NJ, NM, OR, VT, and WA) have enacted laws permitting assisted suicide, or what they term "Death with Dignity." These laws allow terminally ill adults to obtain lethal medications to end their lives. Legislation is being considered in another 15 states (DE, IL, IA, KY, MA, MI, MN, NH, NC, PA, RI, TN, and WI) to permit assisted suicide, and Colorado and California have pending Constitutional Amendments. There is legislation in New Jersey to repeal the existing law, and the citizens of West Virginia will have an opportunity to vote to protect against assisted suicide in their Constitution this year.

Legalizing assisted suicide sends a dangerous message that some lives are less worth living, undermining the moral imperative to care for the vulnerable and to alleviate suffering without resorting to death as a solution. It erodes the doctor-patient relationship by involving physicians in directly causing death, fundamentally conflicting with the medical profession's Hippocratic Oath to do no harm.

Moreover, the potential for abuse and coercion, particularly among the elderly, disabled, and marginalized communities, is vast. This is seen throughout Europe and Canada, where depression, disability, and conditions like autism are now sufficient diagnosis for assisted suicide, and even children are targeted. This will only grow as economic pressures and the burden of care may coerce vulnerable individuals into choosing death over life, presenting assisted suicide as a cost-effective solution to complex health and social care challenges.

This growing moral issue is exactly why we've developed Faithful at the End of Life, a free program that you can bring to your church or organization. Visit us at [gctrl.org/speaker](https://gctrl.org/speaker) to schedule your FATEL presentation today.

While Ohio is not currently debating an assisted suicide law (and state law criminalizes and penalizes it), there is ongoing related discussion on end-of-life issues that we are engaging in, such as revising Ohio's Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) protocol, efforts to change how advance directives work and are filed, and there is ongoing policy development by the "Death With Dignity" crowd. This is another reason that the work we are doing is so very unique and necessary right now. Thank you to everyone who continues to support this work, especially with your donations to our c(4) entity.

AN EVENING WITH

# STEVENTHEN HOLLAND

***Don't forget to register!***

Sponsorships available. Contact our office at 614-445-8508 to request a sponsor packet. Or, go online at [gcrtl.org/banquet](http://gcrtl.org/banquet). Hosting a table is free! Tables will seat ten this year.

**Monday, June 10, 2024 | Villa Milano**

*a benefit supporting the work of Greater Columbus Right to Life*



Conceived in gang rape, his mother escaped her group home to give him life.



## MEET STEVENTHEN HOLLAND

That is not a typo; We spelled his name correctly! And when you join us on Monday, June 10th, you are going to not only learn about his name, but also why StevenThen has become the most popular speaker that you haven't heard of ...yet.

StevenThen Holland is an author, recording artist, passionate worship leader, motivational speaker, and founder of Broken Not Dead Ministries.

He currently lives in Alabama with his wife Rachel and their beautiful daughters: Isabella, Eliana, and Kadence. He has written, recorded, and released over 20 songs to date.

His life is the result of the gang-rape of an eighteen-year-old mentally challenged young woman. Incredibly, despite his mother's lack of intellectual ability, homelessness, and a society that was constantly pressuring her to abort him, he survived. However, his mother couldn't care for him and placed him in foster care, where he was later adopted. He wouldn't be reunited with his birth mother for 27 years.

StevenThen travels the country, sharing his message of HOPE and RESTORATION for the BROKEN built on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Register today at [gcrtl.org/banquet](http://gcrtl.org/banquet) to meet him while supporting our life-saving work.

## Love Always Wins

but sometimes it needs a little help

**Pregnant and Need Help?  
Abortion Pill Reversal  
Post Abortion Healing  
Volunteer to Help**



Whether you need some help or want to help, there is space and a place for you.  
**LoveAlwaysWins.Life**



Have you heard of our "Love Always Wins" campaign? We have yard signs, drop cards, and more available at no cost to our members and volunteers.

Program materials refer those who see them to a website for life affirming pregnancy help centers, abortion pill reversal, post-abortion healing resources, and a referral to volunteer to help a family in need.

We are excited that numerous churches as well as schools within the Diocese of Columbus are already incorporating this program, and dozens of volunteers are placing the drop cards and yard signs around town.

Give us a call today to get your materials and make a difference!

## Spiritual Adoption

From now through Christmas, we are inviting our supporters to join us in a Spiritual Adoption program.

The premise of the program is that each participant “spiritually adopts” an unborn child at risk of abortion and prays for that child over the next 9 months.

We have a limited supply of prayer cards in our office that are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Three designs are available including a fetal development design, an image of the Holy Family, and an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe (in Spanish) along with a prayer and a space to name your unborn child.



## SCOTUS Hears Abortion Pill Case

On March 26, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the FDA vs AHM case. This case represents a pivotal confrontation over the bounds of federal authority, the sanctity of life, and the moral and ethical obligations of medical professionals. It centers on a challenge by the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine to the FDA’s approval and subsequent deregulation of mifepristone, a medication used in the most common method of medication abortion in the United States.

The Alliance's position underscores the profound concerns over the FDA’s actions, arguing that these not only contravene deeply held moral convictions but also impose undue burdens on healthcare providers who are opposed to participating in abortion.

### Key Points:

**Injury and Standing:** The Alliance argued that its members face concrete injuries from the FDA's deregulation of abortion drugs. These injuries include being compelled to act against their consciences by participating in or treating complications from abortions, increased malpractice risks, and emotional and spiritual distress. The necessity of diverting resources and attention from other medical duties to deal with the consequences of abortion drugs further underscores their claim of harm. The Alliance asserts these injuries are neither speculative nor hypothetical but are direct consequences of the FDA’s actions, which have led to increased usage of abortion drugs and thus an increased likelihood of complications requiring emergency medical care.

**FDA's Overreach and Safety Concerns:** The case critiques the FDA’s rationale for easing restrictions on mifepristone, questioning the thoroughness and adequacy of the studies and data the FDA relied upon. AHM argues that FDA changes, such as removing the requirement for in-person visits, overlooked critical safety concerns, including the ability to diagnose ectopic pregnancies and accurately assess age.

**Moral and Ethical Implications:** Beyond legal arguments, the Alliance's challenge embodies a broader moral and ethical stand against an encroachment upon the sanctity of life and the integrity of the medical profession, emphasizing the duty of healthcare providers to protect life at all stages.

We can anticipate that the Supreme Court will rule on this most significant abortion case since Dobbs, sometime before the end of June.

## Job Posting: Executive Director

Greater Columbus Right to Life is currently seeking an individual to fill the role of Executive Director for the organization as the current executive director transitions to the newly created role of President. The executive director will have the opportunity to engage in the day-to-day operations of Greater Columbus Right to Life while learning critical leadership, organizational management, and executive skills under the direction of the President and Board. The executive director will provide:

- Day-to-day leadership to staff members and volunteers
- Oversight of office and operations
- High-level involvement in grassroots program development and execution
- Critical networking, recruitment, and relationship building with donors, churches, and like-minded organizations
- Event planning and management
- Other duties as assigned

An ideal candidate will be a servant leader who seeks to grow Greater Columbus Right to Life and its mission to protect innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death.

Demonstrable pro-life conviction is required, as are excellent writing skills and experience within an office environment. Applicants will be required to pass a BCII background check and complete Protecting God’s Children or similar curriculum.

Greater Columbus Right to Life is a mid-sized regional pro-life organization directly serving the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Franklin, Delaware, Morrow, Union, Madison, Pickaway, Fairfield, and Licking Counties, as well as surrounding counties that do not have an established pro-life organization. Flagship programs of the organization include the annual Roe Remembrance, Sidewalk Counseling, a Speaker’s Bureau, and Faithful at the End of Life.

While Greater Columbus Right to Life does not offer a traditional benefits package, a QSERHA and technology reimbursement program are available.

Interested candidates should forward a resume, writing sample, and cover letter to Beth Vanderkooi at [beth@gcrtl.org](mailto:beth@gcrtl.org) or 4900 Reed Rd, Ste. 200; Columbus, OH 43220. Applications will be considered until the position is filled; priority given to those received by April 15, 2024.

*This posting can also be found online at [www.gcrtl.org/about](http://www.gcrtl.org/about).*