

TALKING POINTS FOR COUNCILS – FEBRUARY 2021

Worthy Grand Knights, Worthy Religious & Civil Rights Committee Chairmen, and Brothers all:

I offer the following Talking and Informational Points and Prayer **for you to share (distribute) with all your council brother knights by email** for the month of February 2021. Also please appoint a council member to serve as R&C chairman.

1. Introduction of S3030/A4848 “Reproductive Freedom Act”

On October 2, 2020, Governor Murphy announced his support for plans to introduce legislation that would expand access to abortion. [View the announcement by Governor Murphy Here](#)

Following Governor Murphy’s announcement, New Jersey’s Catholic Bishops issued the following statement expressing disappointment and sadness about the Reproductive Freedom Act and asking people of the faith and good will to oppose the legislation. You can read the Catholic Bishops’ Statement [here](#)

If signed into law, The Reproductive Freedom Act would:

- Explicitly guarantee every individual, regardless of residency, the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, which includes contraception, the right to an abortion, and the right to carry a pregnancy to term;
- Enables all qualified healthcare professionals to provide abortion services in the state, including by not limited to physicians, advanced practice nurse, physician assistant, certified midwife, or certified nurse midwife;
- Repeals current state laws and regulations that limits access to abortion services and contraception, including parental notification and partial birth abortion ban laws;
- Invalidates and prohibits the future adoption of all laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, resolutions, policies, standards or parts thereof that conflict with the provisions or the express or implied intent of the Reproduction Freedom Act;

Establishes that a fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus does not have independent rights under the laws of this state;
- Require the legislature to allocate funding for abortion services and contraceptives in the annual state budget; and

· Would eliminate the requirement that an autopsy and medicolegal death investigation be conducted in a case where a fetal death occurs without medical attendance.

At this time, The New Jersey Catholic Conference, Diocesan Respect Life Offices, and other Pro-Life groups are working to determine when the legislature intends to advance S3030/A4848 “The Reproductive Freedom Act” and how best to the Pro-life community can voice our opposition to this legislation that would guarantee abortion on demand.

We are asking all brother knights to sign up for the New Jersey Catholic Conference Advocacy Network to receive advocacy alerts on this legislation.

You can sign up for the New Jersey Action Alert Network [here](#)

New Jersey Right to Life: Reproductive Freedom Act is Raw Abuse of Power that Will Oppress the Will of NJ Voters

2. Religious & Civil Rights Issues

From the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) A rising threat to the lives of unborn babies is the chemical abortion pill. The number of chemical abortions in the US has gone up dramatically, while the overall number of abortions has decreased. COVID-19 is expected to only make the problem worse, with more women (and teen girls) seeking chemical abortions at home—even illegally, by mail and without a doctor’s prescription. This is especially scary because chemical abortion can be more painful, traumatic, and risky for women than surgical abortion. But there is hope: **a new bill has been introduced that could help protect mothers and babies from chemical abortion.**

SAVE Moms and Babies Act ([H.R. 4399](#) / [S. 3072](#)) The Support and Value Expectant (SAVE) Moms & Babies Act ([H.R. 4399](#) / [S. 3072](#)) could help improve regulation of chemical abortion pills. The SAVE Moms & Babies Act would codify current FDA (Food and Drug Administration) safety regulations **requiring physicians** to dispense the pills, **prevent providers from dispensing these drugs** remotely, by mail, or via tele-medicine, and **prevent the (FDA) from approving new chemical abortion drugs** or from making labeling changes to existing abortion drugs. Please [TAKE ACTION NOW](#) to urge your Senators and Representative to co-sponsor and work to enact S. 3072 or H.R. 4399 or to thank them if they have already done so.

3. Also from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has administered the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) since its creation by Congress in 2005. This program provides

grants to nonprofits and houses of worship in order to enhance security through physical security improvements, funding for emergency planning and training, upgrading security systems, and some renovation projects. Congress provided \$90 million for the program last year.

In response to attacks on Catholic churches and schools, as well as attacks on the property of other faith groups, the USCCB is joining an interfaith coalition in asking Congress to quadruple the funding to \$360 million.

The Church teaches that the government has the duty to foster the conditions in which religion can thrive. This is a government program that helps protect people of all faiths. [Urge Congress to increase funding](#) to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program today!

4. New Jersey Bishop Speaks Out

A year after NJ's Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act took effect, Metuchen Bishop James F. Checchio reminded Catholics in the diocese that it is their shared responsibility to respect & defend all human life. During the first five months after the law passed on Aug. 1, 2019, 12 NJ residents ended their lives under its provisions. The law allows those with a terminal diagnosis and a life expectancy of 6 months or less to seek permission from two doctors to end their lives with lethal medicine. Our efforts to save lives amid the coronavirus pandemic, Bishop Checchio said, are inconsistent with this law. "Young or old, healthy or sick, all human life is precious."(Our Sunday Visitor, 8/30/20)

5. On January 5th, Governor Murphy signed into law the bills NJ

S3804/A5508 that expands insurance coverage for abortion and removes the religious exemption thus requiring church organizations to provide services and/or drugs which are contrary to God's law.

1. We want to thank all the DDs, GKs, R&C Chairs for their efforts in this important matter. When we became aware of this issue the bill had already passed the Assembly. We as an organization put a plan in place to contact Senators by letter, calls, and visits. We faced many obstacles in addressing this issue, the actual verbiage that removed the exemption was "buried" in a section of one of eleven bills covering health care in NJ. We tried to give testimony when the bill was in committee. We were told that the owning committee was the Budget committee. When we went to the Senate Budget committee hearing the bill was pulled and we were told the bill was covered in another committee and has moved to the Senate

floor for vote. The removal of the exemption was so hidden that many Senators were not aware of the removal of the exemption.

To some extent our efforts were successful. We had a meeting with the Republican Minority WHIP and after bringing the issues to her attention she was able to gain support for the entire Republican community to vote no on the bill. A few Democratic Senators abstained but the bill passed will only have the exact number of votes needed. We believe had we had more time or had a process/organization in place we would have been able to defeat the legislation.

2. The recent victory for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the Supreme Court provides relief at the federal level but it is not clear of the effect on local Laws so we must stay on top of this issue.

3. Based upon the experience we had during this legislation we are reviewing plans to determine the best way for the Knights to address legislative issues that impact our Church and our Faith.

6. Governor Murphy joined several other Democratic Governors and halted all elective procedures during the pandemic, but carved out an explicit exception for the performance of abortions. This action is not surprising since Governor Murphy is using \$20 Million of our tax dollars this year to subsidize Planned Parenthood, a private, non- profit organization that financially supports him and his party at election time. Please contact Governor Murphy and tell him he needs to reverse this decision. Tell him that abortion is an elective procedure and valuable resources and supplies should instead be utilized for urgent health care needs that will actually help save human lives. We, as knights must reaffirm our strong stance opposing abortion. . When you look at recent polls, you kind of wonder what happened. Latest poll shows 47 % of the Catholic's polled are OK with Abortion.

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7. From Marie Tasy, NJRTL

There is a very informative article which appeared in a Town Hall on-line publication by Dr. David Prentice, who is Vice President and Research Director for the Charlotte Lozier Institute and Tara Sander Lee, Ph.D., a Senior Fellow and Director of Life Sciences for the Charlotte Lozier Institute. The article describes how some scientists and liberal media sources are again making false claims about the use of aborted fetal tissue in experiments and vaccines to combat COVID-19. This article provides some very helpful and useful information to counter those claims. Link to article

<https://townhall.com/columnists/davidaprentice/2020/03/26/exploiting-a-crisis-unethicalexperiments-undermine-real-help-for-coronavirus-patients-n2565761>

The NJ Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (A152/S462) This legislation (A152/S462) will ensure that babies who survive an abortion will be given proper medical care and treatment as any other baby born alive at the same gestational stage. Two motions to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the Pain Capable and Born Alive bills both failed to reach the necessary 60 votes.

8. Bill S2781/A4454 (would mandate that public school kindergartners through K 12 be taught sexual and gender identity.)

The bill has been passed by the Assembly and Senate and is expected to be signed by the Governor. If passed every school district will be required to include instruction in the curriculum regarding gender identity lessons to children as young as 5 years old.

The original bill stated grades 9-12 and was amended to K-12. The family should address these issues to young children not the public school system.

9. From New Jersey Catholic Conference - Action Alert

Charities and nonprofits are on the frontline responding to our neighbors and communities in need during the COVID-19 pandemic, but risk catastrophic damage from evaporating revenue, new and rising demands for assistance, and major disruptions in charitable giving.

Tell Congress to act now and provide emergency aid to nonprofit organizations by expanding charitable giving and providing organizations with grants, loans, and tax credits.

Click the link below to log in and send your message:

<https://www.voteroice.net/BroadcastLinks/LjHW-Lrp75iCvseLG3sbKg>

10. Catholic Schools Need Your Help! Catholic education has played an important role in lifting many from poverty to a more hopeful future. This mission is in danger as a result of the economic devastation facing many families across the country. Abrupt unemployment and lost income has meant that families suddenly find themselves unable to make the tuition payments that sustain our schools. Additionally, our parishes which normally provide financial support to the schools to keep tuition within financial reach for families have lost their Sunday collections with the halt to the public celebration of Masses. Please take a moment to contact your Members of Congress to ask for emergency aid to Catholic schools and our families in the next Covid-19 Legislation package. Our requests include: equitable access to K12 federal funds for Catholic schools, direct funding to families for tuition aid and tax breaks for K12 tuition payments. We encourage you to add your own personal story in the message as well. Catholic schools urgently need help in this time of uncertainty. By speaking with one voice, we can amplify this problem with Congress and provide help for our families. <https://www.voterve.net/USCCB/Campaigns/74377/Respond>

See commentary: "Catholic Schools Are Worth Saving" by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York; Cardinal Seán O'Malley the archbishop of Boston; Archbishop José Gómez the archbishop of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. to Leadership and Pres. Trump on Schools...

<https://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/catholic-schools-are-worth-saving>

11. A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION IN TIME OF PANDEMIC O Mary, you always brighten our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the Cross, took part in Jesus' pain while remaining steadfast in faith. O loving Mother, you know what we need, and we are confident you will provide for us as at Cana in Galilee. Intercede for us with your Son Jesus, the Divine Physician, for those who have fallen ill, for those who are vulnerable, and for those who have died. Intercede also for those charged with protecting the health and safety of others and for those who are tending to the sick and seeking a cure. Help us, O Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who took upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows, so as to lead us, through the Cross, to the glory of the Resurrection. Amen. Under thy protection we seek refuge, O Holy Mother of God. In our needs, despise not our petitions, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen. Adapted from the prayer of Pope Francis

12. Knights Prayer for Life

Lord God, I thank you today for the gift of my life, And for the lives of all my brothers and sisters. I know there is nothing that destroys more life than abortion, Yet I rejoice that you have conquered death by the Resurrection of Your Son. I am ready to do my part in ending abortion. Today I commit myself Never to be silent, Never to be passive, Never to be forgetful of the unborn. I commit myself to be active in the pro-life movement, And never to stop defending life Until all my brothers and sisters are protected, And our nation once again becomes A nation with liberty and justice Not just for some, but for all, Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

Please share with friends and family!

NOTE, if your Council does not have an active Council Representative please appoint one ASAP. For Councils to use to appoint Council Representatives (Log-in required):

[LINK](#)

Wear a mask! Stay Safe! Stay well!

Respectfully submitted

Andrew E. Lipenta, PSD, VSM

R&C Committee Chairman