



MICHIGAN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

January 7, 2020

Dear Father, Deacon, Pastoral Administrator:

Please accept my gratitude for your assistance in successfully promoting the Michigan Values Life initiative to end dismemberment abortion and for providing the Catholic community with opportunities to sign the petition. Without the outpouring of support from faithful Catholics, it would not have been possible to collect the number of signatures necessary to allow this citizen-initiated legislation to be considered.

On December 23, 2019, petitions with the signatures of 379,418 Michiganders were submitted to the Secretary of State. Over the coming weeks, the Elections Division will certify the petition forms, checking the validity and sufficiency of signatures. The law requires that 340,047 of the signatures submitted be valid for the measure to be proposed to the Legislature. Once the petitions are approved, the Legislature will have 40 calendar days to vote "yes" or "no." If a simple majority in both chambers approve the bill, it becomes law without needing the governor's approval. In fact, it was the governor's promise to veto earlier legislation that would ban the dismemberment abortion procedure which prompted this citizen-initiated legislative effort. In the alternative, if either Legislative chamber fails to vote or votes "no," the issue will be placed before the people as a ballot question in 2020.

Please keep in mind that nearly identical legislation previously passed both the House and Senate in May 2019. Therefore, it is anticipated that the Legislature will readily approve the citizen-initiated legislation as well and ban the brutal dismemberment abortion procedure (also referred to as Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)) in our state. As you are aware, dismemberment abortion is usually performed between thirteen and twenty-four weeks of gestation and involves tearing the unborn baby apart limb by limb inside the womb, to individually remove each of the body parts. The initiative prohibits the procedure from being performed on living fetuses by amending the state's 2011 law banning partial-birth abortion.

I cannot stress enough how pivotal the Catholic community was, all throughout the state, in gathering signatures to end this brutal practice. The bold witness to life was so very significant - Thank you! In 2018, it was reported that Michigan had 1,908 dismemberment abortions, or more than five per day. This is 7.1 percent of the state's 26,716 abortions reported that year, and 54.4 percent of all the abortions reported after thirteen weeks gestation. Now that Michiganders have spoken of the need to end dismemberment abortion in our state, we await certification of the signatures and a forthcoming vote of the Legislature on the initiative. Through your diocesan contacts, we will keep you informed of these next steps. Please pray for the final success of this important endeavor.

One more reminder: Despite the completion of the initiative to end dismemberment abortion, the position of Michigan's diocesan bishops and MCC to **NOT support** the Michigan Heartbeat Coalition's petition remains unchanged.

With deep appreciation for your cooperation to uphold the dignity of unborn life, I am

Sincerely,

Paul A. Long
President and CEO