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Note: Photos with captions are available upon request.

Grassroots Effort Aims to Add Life-Saving Section to Florida Constitution

NEWBERRY, Fla. — A citizens’ group recently launched an effort seeking to amend the Florida Constitution to recognize the “God-given right to life” of the “preborn individual.”

“A humanitarian crisis is affecting the most vulnerable and victimized people in Florida,” says Mark Minck, state chairman of Protect Human Life Florida. “The lives of 79,817 preborn humans were snuffed out last year in our state, and that number is expected to increase significantly.”

The effort seeks to stop the loss of life.

Florida Statutes send mixed messages when it comes to the protection of life in the womb, Minck says. The amendment his group proposes addresses that.

The confusion starts here:

During the 2014 legislative session, Florida lawmakers passed the “[Florida Unborn Victims of Violence Act](#).” According to the bill, “the term ‘unborn child’ means a member of the species homo sapiens, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb.” The measure created a new criminal offense for acts against women who are carrying an unborn child.

Yet [Florida Statute 390.011](#) provides an exception for abortion. It defines the procedure as “the termination of human pregnancy with an intention other than to produce a live birth or to remove a dead fetus.”

So according to the state of Florida, it’s a crime to cause the death of an unborn child under one statute, but completely permissible under another, Minck points out.

“The difference seems to be whether the child was wanted at the time of death,” Minck says. “If the preborn child’s death was at the hands of someone committing a crime, then the punishment would be the same as if the mother had been killed, according to Florida law.

“However, if an unborn child is not wanted and is killed, it’s simply considered an abortion, a completely legal procedure, in most cases. Our laws need to be free of this kind of

inconsistency and confusion. Do we really want a situation in Florida where our courts seek to determine if an unborn child was wanted at the time of death?”

Protect Human Life Florida has proposed allowing voters to decide.

The group hopes to put the question on the November 2024 ballot about whether to change the state constitution to add a [Human Life Protection Amendment](#). If affirmed by voters, the measure would protect the preborn, defined as “a preborn human person at any stage of development.”

And that would remove inconsistencies in the law, Minck says.

Opponents of the proposal claim the amendment could put women at risk of having to defend themselves after a miscarriage. That’s not true, he adds.

“I understand why pro-abortion activists would want to suggest that as part of their strategy to oppose the effort, but it is covered in the legal wording” he says.

The proposed amendment also states that “life-saving procedures to save the life of the mother shall not be construed as a violation when accompanied by reasonable steps to save the life of the preborn individual.”

To give voters the chance to approve or reject the change, the group first must collect 891,589 petitions, signed by registered voters in the state, by Feb. 1, 2024. Florida is one of only 18 states that allows citizens to initiate the process.

Once on the ballot, 60 percent of Florida voters participating in the election must vote in favor of the amendment for the measure to pass.

It’s not the organization’s first attempt to strengthen Florida’s protection of unborn human life.

The group had hoped to give voters the chance to approve a similar amendment in the upcoming general election on Nov. 8. That measure would have protected all human lives with a detectable heartbeat, regardless of “age, illness or disability.”

In total, 31 initiatives attempted the process unsuccessfully to be on this year’s ballot. The issues ranged from the legalization of recreational marijuana use to the expansion of casino gambling. The top two efforts spent an average of \$62.94 per required petition.

“Groups with deep-pocket corporate support spend millions paying petition-gatherers to aggressively solicit signatures where people gather,” Minck says.

In contrast, the Human Life Protection Amendment is a grassroots initiative, powered by volunteers.

“They’re passionate about the protection of all human life,” Minck says. And that allows the campaign to operate at a fraction of the cost, with expenses covered by donations from like-minded donors.

When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, the decision returned authority to protect unborn life to the states. Currently, [a new Florida law](#)—passed by the Republican-led legislature and signed by Gov. Ron DeSantis in April—protects the unborn after 15 weeks gestation.

“But that barely reduces the number of pregnancies intentionally terminated in the Sunshine State each year,” Minck says.

Last year, 94 percent of abortions reported in Florida were performed before 12 weeks of pregnancy, according to the state’s Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA).

“As the most dangerous state for the preborn in the south, Florida draws abortion-minded women from other states—they now travel here to terminate their pregnancies,” Minck says. In 2021, Florida was third in the number of abortions performed, behind only California and New York.

Anyone registered to vote in Florida can sign the Human Life Protection Amendment petition. People who signed during the group’s previous effort must submit a new signed petition to have their voices heard.

Petitions can be mailed or collected in person, but can’t be submitted online. Original documents can be mailed to the address listed on the petition, before being submitted to each county’s election office for verification. The deadline is Feb. 1, 2024.

To print a petition, or learn how to help, visit www.HumanLifeFL.com.