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# focus

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MICHIGAN  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

# Protect Life

## VOTE NO ON PROPOSAL 3

ABORTION IS ON THE  
BALLOT IN MICHIGAN  
THIS FALL, AND  
THE STAKES COULD  
NOT BE HIGHER.

In the span of this election, Michigan could go from a state with laws protecting the unborn and vulnerable women from abortion to a state that permanently guarantees unlimited, unregulated abortion.

Proposal 3 goes *far* beyond just keeping abortion legal or reinstating the now overturned *Roe v. Wade* decision.

It would allow abortions to be performed by anyone, at any point in pregnancy, and for any reason. It would throw away state laws regulating quality, safety, and inspections for abortion clinics. It would remove parental consent requirement for teens seeking abortions, and also teens seeking gender reassignment surgeries.

Proposal 3 would move Michigan far from a society where human life is welcomed and where mothers do not have to turn to abortion. Voters must reject this extreme proposal and allow our state to build a culture that values all human life by supporting existing efforts led by pregnancy centers and Catholic Charities agencies to assist mothers in need.

As Catholics, we believe every person has a right to life, which is the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible.<sup>1</sup> Abortion is a “preeminent” threat to the dignity of human life because it is a direct attack on life itself, “the most fundamental good and the condition for all others.”<sup>2</sup>

Already, millions of dollars are pouring into Michigan to get Proposal 3 passed, as this measure is seen by many across the country as a trial run for similar efforts to expand abortion in other states.

As Catholics who stand for the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death, it is time to come together and defeat this dangerous proposal. The Catholic bishops of Michigan emphatically urge a NO vote on Proposal 3 and

strongly urge you to tell every person you know that this amendment goes too far on abortion, and to vote NO.

This issue of **focus** will explain what Proposal 3 would do and why it is dangerous for Michigan. It will empower you to talk with your friends and family about why this amendment must be defeated.

In addition to upholding the dignity of human life, there are several other principles based in Catholic social teaching to consider when voting. This edition of **focus** will also equip Catholics with the principles rooted in the Church’s rich teachings on social justice that are helpful to making a well-informed vote on the entire general election ballot. ■

## *What You Need to Know About Proposal 3*

**How would this change Michigan’s abortion law?** Michigan’s existing pre-*Roe* law prohibits abortion except to save the mother’s life, in addition to numerous other laws that regulate abortion. Under this amendment, all those laws would be revoked, and it would be nearly impossible for the Legislature to pass any laws to regulate abortion and protect women and children.

**Why is this amendment being proposed?** This proposal was launched in anticipation that the U.S. Supreme Court would strike down *Roe*. The Supreme Court ruling allowed abortion regulation to return to individual state legislatures to decide, yet this amendment would take that power away from the Legislature by locking unlimited abortion access into the state constitution.

**How would passing this amendment compare to when *Roe v. Wade* was in effect?** This amendment would take Michigan far beyond what was allowed for abortion under *Roe*. In the half century since *Roe*, dozens of laws have been passed to regulate abortion. Under this amendment, those protections would be gone, and abortion would be unrestricted and unregulated.

**How late into pregnancy would an abortion be allowed under this amendment?** The amendment would allow for abortions all throughout pregnancy. The amendment appears to allow a ban on late-term abortions, but provides an

exception based on the mother’s physical and mental health. That means a late-term abortion could be justified for almost any reason.

**How would Michigan compare to other states if this amendment passed?** According to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, Michigan is one of 36 states that require parental involvement in their child’s decision to have an abortion, one of 32 states requiring abortions be performed by a licensed physician, and one of 43 states that prohibit abortion after a specified point in pregnancy.

Under Proposal 3, Michigan would no longer require parental consent, that physicians perform abortions, or a limit to when an abortion can happen in a pregnancy, putting Michigan in the minority of states in all three categories. ■



# LAWS AFFECTED BY THE ANYTHING GOES ABORTION AMENDMENT

Because Proposal 3 seeks to create a constitutional “right” to “reproductive freedom,” this amendment could have negative implications for dozens of state laws protecting life and regulating abortion.

Below are examples of laws that could be revoked or limited if Proposal 3 were to pass:

- Increased penalties for later term abortions when babies are fully formed.
- Law requiring babies born alive during an abortion be protected and cared for.
- Conscience rights of hospitals and doctors who decline to take unborn human life.
- Ban on taxpayer-funded Medicaid dollars to pay for abortions.
- Ban on school employees from helping a child obtain an abortion.
- Informed consent provisions for an abortion, such as a 24-hour waiting period, information on fetal development and abortion procedures, and ultrasound viewing.
- Respectful disposal of fetal remains.

“

Let's not pretend that this constitutional amendment is simply about creating a so-called right to an abortion. It goes much, much farther than that.

**John Bursch**

Former Michigan Solicitor General

## *Responding to Arguments Made for Proposal 3*

The following are examples of what supporters may say about the abortion amendment. Study these responses so that you can help your family and friends better understand the consequences of this proposal.

**THEY SAY** “This amendment ensures women will not be prosecuted for having a miscarriage/abortion.”

**WE RESPOND** There is no history of women being prosecuted in Michigan for either of those circumstances. In addition, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled in 1963 that a woman receiving an abortion is not guilty and cannot be charged. State law also explicitly defines abortion as not including miscarriage.

**THEY SAY** “This amendment stops the government from prosecuting women who experience miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies.”

**WE RESPOND** Abortion is an intentional act to destroy a life, while a miscarriage is a spontaneous action within a woman's body. An ectopic pregnancy is when a fertilized egg implants outside the uterus, where it cannot survive. A woman receiving treatment for an ectopic pregnancy or suffering a miscarriage is not the same as choosing to undergo an abortion. Both state law and the Michigan Supreme Court are clear that women rightfully cannot be prosecuted for an abortion.

**THEY SAY** “Michigan residents should have the constitutional right to abortion care and reproductive freedom.”

**WE RESPOND** Women already have the right to reproductive care in the state of Michigan. Women have access to prenatal, postpartum, and infertility care. Pregnancy help centers provide support and referrals for women unable to see a doctor.

Abortion is not reproductive care as it harms women mentally and physically and guarantees that out of the two patients involved, one will die. Abortion is never medically necessary to help save the life of a mother.

**THEY SAY** “Decisions on abortion should remain between a woman and her doctor”

**WE RESPOND** With this amendment, nonphysicians would be able to conduct abortions, undermining the notion that women would be making these decisions with the help of an appropriately licensed physician.

The amendment would block the state from prohibiting abortions in cases where “in the professional judgment of an attending health care professional,” the abortion “is medically indicated to protect the life or physical or mental health of the pregnant individual.”

Under Michigan law, “health care professional” means more than just a physician, as that definition also includes dentists, chiropractors, massage therapists, acupuncturists, counselors, and psychologists, to name a few examples.

The language also says the state could not “penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against someone for aiding or assisting a pregnant individual in exercising their right to reproductive freedom with their voluntary consent.”

Because of that, a school counselor, for example, could take a 13-year-old girl to get an abortion, contraception, or undergo sterilization without telling her parents, and there is nothing her parents could legally do, if they ever found out.

**THEY SAY** “This amendment allows for women to have autonomy over their own bodies”

**WE RESPOND** A pregnant woman carries inside her a human life that deserves the same dignity that she should be afforded. If a woman becomes pregnant unexpectedly or unwillingly and she feels she is unable or unwilling to parent her child, there are options to ensure the baby is safe and cared for through the state’s adoption process or the Safe Delivery Law, which allows mothers to surrender their newborns for adoption, no questions asked.

**THEY SAY** “This amendment still allows for restricting late-term abortions.”

**WE RESPOND** The amendment creates broad exceptions to any ban enacted on late-term abortions, including for reasons related to mental health. Any pregnant woman could claim not getting a late-term abortion would cause her anxiety or stress, so essentially no abortion would be restricted.

**THEY SAY** “This amendment still allows the state to restrict/regulate abortion after viability.”

**WE RESPOND** This amendment changes the definition of fetal viability to no longer mean when the baby can survive outside the womb, instead defining it as when a baby can survive outside of the womb without “extraordinary medical measures.”

This means that a prematurely born infant who needs intensive medical treatment could be considered not viable in the eyes of the mother and the “healthcare professional,” who does not have to be a licensed physician under the language provided in the amendment.

**THEY SAY** “Over 700,000 Michiganders signed this proposal to put it on the ballot, which shows how widely supported it is.”

**WE RESPOND** Paid petition gatherers are not legally required to tell people everything that a proposal would do. Thus, it is likely that most people who signed the petition did not read the proposal or understand the reality of what they were signing. People from various backgrounds, including those who say they are pro-choice, overwhelmingly oppose partial-birth abortion and support health and safety regulations on abortion clinics. This proposal would give constitutional protections to third-trimester abortions up to birth and likely revoke state law that requires abortion facilities to be licensed and inspected. ■





## BALLOT SUMMARY LANGUAGE

The following language is what voters will read about Proposal 3 on their November 8 General Election or absentee ballot.

*A proposal to amend the state constitution to establish new individual right to reproductive freedom, including right to make all decisions about pregnancy and abortion; allow state to regulate abortion in some cases; and forbid prosecution of individuals exercising this established right.*

*This proposed constitutional amendment would:*

- Establish new individual right to reproductive freedom, including right to make and carry out all decisions about pregnancy, such as prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, sterilization, abortion, miscarriage management, and infertility;
- Allow state to regulate abortion after fetal viability, but not prohibit if medically needed to protect a patient's life or physical or mental health;
- Forbid state discrimination in enforcement of this right; prohibit prosecution of an individual, or a person helping a pregnant individual, for exercising rights established by this amendment;
- Invalidate state laws conflicting with this amendment.



The words are so vague that they essentially allow abortion up to the moment of birth—precisely what nearly every Michigander rejects.

**John Bursch**

Former Michigan Solicitor General

## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The following language is what supporters of Proposal 3 are seeking to place in the Michigan Constitution.

- (1) *Every individual has a fundamental right to reproductive freedom, which entails 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. An individual's right to reproductive freedom shall not be denied, burdened, nor infringed upon unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means. Notwithstanding the above, the state may regulate the provision of abortion care after fetal viability, provided that in no circumstance shall the state prohibit an abortion that, in the professional judgement of an attending health care professional, is medically indicated to protect the life or physical or mental health of the pregnant individual.*
- (2) *The state shall not discriminate in the protection or enforcement of this fundamental right.*
- (3) *The state shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against an individual based on their actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes, including but not limited to miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. Nor shall the state penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against someone for aiding or assisting a pregnant individual in exercising their right to reproductive freedom with their voluntary consent.*
- (4) *For the purposes of this section:*
  - *A state interest is "compelling" only if it is for the limited purpose of protecting the health of an individual seeking care, consistent with accepted clinical standards of practice and evidence based medicine, and does not infringe on that individual's autonomous decision-making.*
  - *"Fetal viability" means: the point in pregnancy when, in the professional judgement of an attending health care professional and based on the particular facts of the case, there is a significant likelihood of the fetus's sustained survival outside the uterus without the application of extraordinary medical measures.*
- (5) *This section shall be self-executing. Any provision of this section held invalid shall be severable from the remaining portions of this section.*



# *The Rest of the Ballot: The Faithful Citizen's Approach to Voting as a Catholic in the November Election*

Along with the portion of the ballot where you vote **NO** on Proposal 3, there will be many other voting decisions in this upcoming general election.

As Catholics, we are obligated to live out faithful citizenship. The bishops tell us that “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”<sup>3</sup>

But what does faithful citizenship mean? The Church has said the lay faithful “are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society.”<sup>4</sup> That includes participating in political life, and for most people, that means exercising the right to vote.

With the November election approaching, we encourage all Catholics to be “guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group”<sup>5</sup> when discerning their choices to vote. The Church is non-partisan and “our cause is the defense of human life and dignity and the protection of the weak and vulnerable.”<sup>6</sup>

Further, living out faithful citizenship requires us to go beyond cable news networks and social media feeds. To truly cast an informed vote, we must make the intentional effort to become informed on Catholic social teaching with regard to policy issues and where candidates and ballot proposals stand on those policy issues.

The U.S. bishops have said it is “essential” that Catholics are “guided by a well-formed conscience that recognizes that all issues do not carry the same moral weight,” and in particular, “the moral obligation to oppose policies promoting intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions.”<sup>7</sup>

The decision on whom to vote for “should take into account a candidate’s commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue.”<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, the decision is “to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching.”<sup>9</sup>

Consider the following broad themes of Catholic moral teaching that serve as a framework for Catholics to form their consciences prior to voting. There are also questions that accompany these themes to help Catholics make decisions on candidates and ballot issues.

## **DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

“Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible”<sup>10</sup>

- Does the candidate or the ballot issue promote policies that affirm the dignity of all human life?
- Does the candidate or the ballot issue stand opposed to policies that allow the deliberate taking of innocent human life?
- Is the candidate consistent in his or her support for all human life from conception to natural death?
- Is the candidate committed to policies to reduce violence of every kind, and in particular, gun violence in our schools and in our communities?
- Is the candidate committed to condemning racism and working to root it out of societal structures?

## **MARRIAGE & FAMILY**

“The family—based on marriage between a man and a woman—is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. It should be defended and strengthened, not redefined, undermined, or further distorted.”<sup>11</sup>

- Does the candidate support policies that affirm the truth of marriage and policies that strengthen and encourage it?
- Does the candidate support policies that serve the needs of families, and in particular, children?
- Does the candidate support policies to encourage employers to compensate workers enough to adequately support their families?
- Does the candidate support policies to assist poor families to allow them to live in dignity and to create opportunities for economic security?





## SERVING THE POOR & VULNERABLE

"When we meet a person truly in need, do we see the face of God?" —Pope Francis

- Does the candidate display a priority for keeping the poor and vulnerable in mind?
- Does the candidate support policies to reduce poverty and dependency?
- Does the candidate support expanding access to affordable housing?
- Does the candidate's policy stances indicate that he or she considers affordable and accessible healthcare a fundamental human right?
- Does the candidate support working for comprehensive immigration reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries?



## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

"In all contexts, its basic contours are the same: it is the 'immun[ity] from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such ways that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.'"<sup>12</sup>

- Does the candidate oppose efforts to force people working for religious institutions to violate their consciences?
- Does the candidate support religious institutions' right to serve according to their sincerely held beliefs?
- Does the candidate oppose efforts to require religious institutions to compromise their moral or religious convictions to participate in government programs?



## EDUCATION

"Parents—the first and most important educators—have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children."<sup>13</sup>

- Does the candidate support policies allowing parents to choose education for their children, including policies that encourage and support a variety of education options?

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

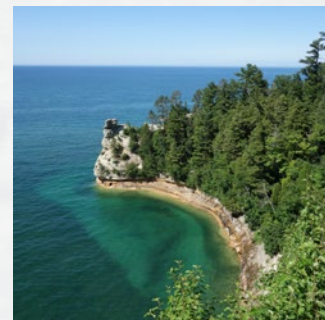
"An ethic of responsibility, rehabilitation, and restoration should be a foundation for the reform of our broken criminal justice system."<sup>14</sup>

- Does the candidate support policies aimed at justly reducing the prison population, helping people leaving prison to reintegrate into their communities, combating recidivism, promoting just sentencing reform, and strengthening relationships between the police and the communities they serve?

## CARE FOR CREATION

"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."<sup>15</sup>

- Does the candidate recognize protecting the land, water, and air we share as a duty of stewardship?
- Does the candidate support policies to protect Michigan's natural resources?



The information in this guide relies primarily on *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, a document produced and occasionally updated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The full document can be found at the USCCB website at [ctlh.cc/fcfc](http://ctlh.cc/fcfc). ■





# Proposal 3 at a Glance

Proposal 3 would allow:

- Abortion at any time in pregnancy for any reason.
- Children to undergo abortion or sterilizing transgender procedures without their parents' consent.
- Elimination of the state's partial-birth abortion ban and late-term abortion ban.
- Anyone to perform an abortion—even those without a medical license
- Abortion providers to be shielded from consequences for injuring or killing women.
- Elimination of all current health and safety regulations on abortion clinics.

# Help Defeat Proposal 3

- Vote **NO**, either in person on Tuesday, November 8, or by absentee ballot beforehand.
- Check your voter registration status and learn how to vote properly by visiting the Michigan Voter Information Center at [mvic.sos.state.mi.us](http://mvic.sos.state.mi.us).
- Encourage your relatives, friends, coworkers, and parishioners to register to vote for the election and vote **NO** on this proposal.
- Pray that the outcome of election may be one that will protect and uphold the dignity of human life.



## GET INVOLVED WITH THE NO ON 3 CAMPAIGN

To volunteer for the Vote No on Proposal 3 campaign, receive updates, and donate money to defeat this dangerous amendment, visit [supportmiwomenandchildren.org](http://supportmiwomenandchildren.org).



## ANYTHING GOES ABORTION AMENDMENT!

1. Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship (FCFC), USCCB, No. 49. 2. FCFC, No. 64. 3. FCFC, No. 13. 4. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 43, as cited in Faithful Citizenship. 5. FCFC, No. 14. 6. FCFC, No. 58. 7. FCFC, No. 37. 8. FCFC, No. 37. 9. FCFC, No. 37. 10. FCFC, No. 49. 11. FCFC, No. 46. 12. *Dignitatis Humanae*, No. 2. 13. FCFC, No. 82. 14. FCFC, No. 84. 15. *Laudato Si*, No. 217.



CATHOLICS. MAKE YOUR VOICE  
**HEARD**  
JOIN THE CATHOLIC ADVOCACY NETWORK

To stay up to date on the campaign to defeat Proposal 3, as well as other issues important to your Catholic faith, join the **Catholic Advocacy Network**. It is a free online service provided by Michigan Catholic Conference and an easy way to put your faith into action. Learn more by scanning the QR code.



Find **Michigan Catholic Conference** on Facebook, Twitter, and at [micatholic.org](http://micatholic.org)