



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

600 REED ROAD, SUITE 102, BROOMALL, PA 19008 (215) 877-2660 (215) 877-2688 FAX NCBCENTER.ORG

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Federal Courts

- On April 21st, the US Supreme Court [granted](#) a request by the abortion industry to stay lower court restrictions on the chemical abortion pill mifepristone. On April 7th, US District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk (Amarillo, TX) ruled that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) violated federal law in its process for approving mifepristone back in 2000. It also violated the law when it subsequently loosened REMS (risk evaluation mitigation strategy) restrictions and other safeguards on its use in 2016, 2019, and 2021. The Biden Administration immediately appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (New Orleans) and on April 12th, a three-judge panel temporarily blocked Kacsmaryk's ruling on the FDA approval of mifepristone but upheld his ruling on its restrictions and safeguards. The Biden administration then appealed this decision to the US Supreme Court and on April 21st, the high court reversed all restrictions on mifepristone while the case moves forward. Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito dissented. For further information, click [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- US District Court Judge Daniel Domenico (Colorado) has [granted](#) the Denver-based pro-life Bella Health and Wellness clinic a temporary exemption from a new law banning abortion pill reversal signed by Governor Jared Polis (D). The judge stated the new law "burdens [Bella's] own First Amendment rights." Laura Wolk Slavis, counsel for The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty which is representing Bella, stated: "Colorado's new law is the opposite of choice—it targets women who have changed their minds and forces them to undergo abortions they want to stop. This law tramples the constitutional rights of these women and their doctors. We are grateful for the court's late-night order halting this draconian law, allowing our clients to continue their good work of serving women in need." For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).
- A coalition of disability rights organizations including the United Spinal Association, the Institute for Patients' Rights, Communities Actively Living Independent & Free (CALIF), and Not Dead Yet are [suing](#) the state of California over its so-called "End of Life Option Act," the 2016 law that legalized assisted suicide. The lawsuit maintains that under the Act, people with life-threatening disabilities are treated differently than non-disabled people when they express a desire for suicide. It also maintains these individuals can be denied appropriate mental health services and medical care by both physicians and insurance companies, and that they can be pressured into choosing suicide.

National

- The US House of Representatives has [passed](#) HR 734, the "Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2023" which prevents males from competing on female sports teams. The vote was 219–213 with every House Republican voting in favor and every Democrat opposing. The bill likely will not pass the Democrat-controlled Senate and

Joe Biden has stated he will veto it if it were to reach his desk. The bill is available [here](#).

- The Biden administration, through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has announced its intention to create a national abortion [hotline](#). HHS is seeking a grant recipient to create the hotline as part of the Title X program which offers family planning services to low-income individuals and those without insurance. The hotline will “offer pregnant clients the opportunity to be provided information and counseling” regarding prenatal care and delivery, infant care, foster care or adoption, and abortion. All information will be “neutral” and “factual.” Tom McClusky, Director of Government Affairs for CatholicVote, [stated](#) the hotline represents a “clear violation of the Hyde amendment, using tax dollars to set up a system to make it easier to kill children.” Click [here](#) and [here](#) for further information.
- The Biden administration, again through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has [issued](#) a “notice of proposed rulemaking” that, in part, redefines the terms ‘person,’ ‘natural person,’ and ‘individual’ to exclude the pre-born. HHS claims that it understands 1 US Code 8 (a provision from the 2002 Born-Alive Infants Protection Act) “to provide a definition of ‘person’ and ‘child’ that ... does not include a fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus.” Click [here](#) for more information.
- Archbishop Timothy Broglio, Ordinary of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, has written a [pastoral letter](#) responding to the Biden administration’s expansion of abortion at Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers and a recent US Senate vote (51–48) that allows these procedures to occur. Broglio stated, in part: “The policy and rule, now in effect, are morally repugnant and incongruent with the Gospel which the faithful are commissioned to share throughout the world (Mt 28:19). Moreover, the new DOD [Department of Defense] policy and VA rule fail to incorporate basic conscience protections, thus creating First Amendment pitfalls for military commanders and VA employees. With this letter, I implore the faithful of this Archdiocese to continue to advocate for human life and to refuse any participation in the evil of abortion.” Click [here](#) for further information. Archbishop Broglio is a member of the NCBC Board of Directors.
- According to Planned Parenthood’s latest annual report, the [organization](#) performed 374,155 abortions in the 2021–2022 fiscal year. This is 9,305 fewer abortions than the previous year or a 2.4% reduction. At the same time, it received \$670.4 million in taxpayer money, a \$37 million increase over the previous year and the most at any time in its history. The report also indicated that forty-one affiliates provide “gender-affirming hormone therapy” and that there were 204,000+ conversations on Roo, the organization’s sex education chatbot. Click [here](#) for further information.

State by State

- The [Florida](#) legislature has passed (House vote was 70–40, Senate was 26–13) and Governor Ron DeSantis (R) has signed SB 300, or the “Heartbeat Protection Act.” The new law protects the life of unborn children after six weeks of pregnancy. The law also expands support services to pregnancy resource centers which include “nonmedical material assistance” such as clothing, car seats, cribs, formula, and diapers, as well as “counseling or mentoring, education materials, and classes regarding pregnancy, parenting, adoption, life skills, and employment readiness.” The bill authorizes \$25

million annually for these programs. For more information, click [here](#). The text of the new law is available [here](#).

- On April 24th, [North Dakota](#) Governor Doug Burgum signed SB 2150, legislation that protects most unborn children from abortion. The new law includes exceptions for women facing “death or a serious health risk” as well as for women who become pregnant as the result of rape or incest, but only during the *first* six weeks of gestation. It also ensures that the state Department of Health & Human Services will publish information about the development of preborn children, the risks of abortion, the existence of abortion pill reversal, and the pregnancy-related services available for women throughout pregnancy. Bergum maintained in a statement, “This bill clarifies and refines existing state law... and reaffirms North Dakota as a pro-life state.” For further information and perspective, click [here](#). The new law is available [here](#).
- [Colorado](#) Governor Jared Polis (D) has signed into law three abortion bills collectively known as the “Reproductive Health Equity Act 2.0” bill package. Among other things, the bills ban abortion pill reversal, require insurance providers to cover the full cost of abortion, and expand access to so-called gender-affirming care. The Bishops of Colorado responded in part by stating: “This year’s abortion bills, referred to as ‘RHEA 2.0, go even further than making Colorado an abortion destination ... While most states in America enact laws to protect and affirm the sanctity of life for the unborn, Colorado joins a minority of 12 states in making abortion even more extreme than the federal precedent that was overturned in *Roe* (1973) and *Casey* (1992). It causes us profound sadness and distress to know that some Catholic legislators voted for this.”
- The [Kansas](#) State Senate has voted 29-11 to override Governor Laura Kelly’s (D) veto of a bill that required women seeking chemical abortion to be informed about the possibility of reversing the effects of the abortion pill. H.B. 2264, which includes the Women’s Right to Know Act, now assures that women will receive information about abortion pill reversal. Pro-life advocates applaud the override as an important step toward protecting unborn life and ensuring that women are fully aware of their options. To date, approximately 4000 lives have been saved through abortion pill reversal.
- Kansas Governor Laura Kelly (D) and Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs (D)—both claiming to be Catholic—have each [vetoed](#) “born alive” bills passed by their state legislatures. These bills would have protected babies who survived botched abortions. As Republican hold supermajorities in the Kansas legislature, it is possible Kelly’s veto could be overridden. No such possibility exists in Arizona.
- [Arkansas](#) Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders (R) has signed the Given Name Act, a law stating school officials cannot call a student by a name that does not match the name listed on the student’s birth certificate without a parent’s permission. Likewise, educators cannot address a child by a pronoun that does not match the child’s sex. The act is available [here](#).
- [Montana](#) Governor Greg Gianforte (R) has signed Senate Bill 99 which bans puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and surgical procedures for the so-called transitioning of minors.
- [Illinois](#) administrative law judge Anna Hamburg-Gal has ruled that the city of Chicago must rehire and pay back lost wages of unionized city employees who were fired or disciplined for refusing a COVID-19 vaccine. The ruling stated, in part, that the city “failed and refused” to bargain in good faith with union leaders “over the effects of its

decision to implement a COVID-19 vaccine mandate.” In addition to rehiring the workers, the city must pay back lost wages with seven percent annual interest. The vaccine mandate was implemented in 2021 by Mayor Lori Lightfoot who at the time warned there would be “consequences” for any city employee who did not abide by it.

International

- The [Netherlands](#) is expanding euthanasia to include children between ages one and ten. The government claims its new rules will apply to children who suffer unbearably from their disease, have no hope of improvement, and for whom palliative care cannot bring relief. It further claims that the new regulation will affect between five and 10 children a year and that “The end of life for this group is the only reasonable alternative to the child’s unbearable and hopeless suffering.”
- On April 15th, more than 100,000 people participated in the Parade for Life and Family in Arequipa, [Peru](#). Guadalupe Valdez of CORVIDA, the sponsoring organization, stated the parade is “a celebration that seeks to affirm, promote, and protect the value of every person and every human life.” CORVIDA is composed of the Life and Family Association, Doctors for Life, Ethics and Law, Project Hope, Let’s Save Them Both, and other groups.

Latest “Bioethics on Air” Podcast

- Episode 111: [Fighting for Conscience and Religious Liberty at CVS](#). Attorney Jonathan Berry returns to *Bioethics on Air* to discuss *Strader v. CVS*, the case of a health care professional fired for refusing to prescribe contraceptive and abortifacient drugs.

Of Note

- “This was the year the worst happened. We knew it was coming. We were prepared. We had to be. Losing the constitutional right to abortion was still heartbreaking — for patients, for providers, for the communities we serve. But we’ve faced challenges before, and we’ve never given up. We won’t start now. WE’RE RELENTLESS.” — Opening lines from [Planned Parenthood’s 2021–2022 Annual Report](#).
- “We will now see menstrual products in all of our men’s bathrooms in our locations ... We are excited to announce this launch that helps us become closer in menstrual equity.”—Excerpt from an email sent by [Rocket Mortgage](#) to its employees.

Sharing the News: If you have public policy news that you would like to share with the NCBC, or if you have colleagues who would like to receive the Bioethics Public Policy Report, please contact Joe Zalot at 215-871-2014 or jzalot@ncbcenter.org. Previous editions of this report are available through the [Public Policy](#) page of the NCBC website.

Sharing the Resources: If you enjoy receiving the Bioethics Public Policy Report and would like to support its continued publication, please consider making a [donation](#) to the NCBC.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center webpage, available at <http://www.ncbcenter.org/>, is a significant resource for bioethics information. NCBC bioethicists are also on-call for consultation twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week, at 215-877-2660.