

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Reproductive Freedom for All initiative in Michigan has worked to establish a ballot initiative to enshrine a right to abortion in the Michigan Constitution. On election day on November 8, vote NO to Proposal 3.

Proposal 3 would amend our State Constitution to include the most extreme “abortion rights” law in the United States. Please take the time to read the weekly bulletin inserts on Proposal 3 that have been prepared by the Michigan Catholic Conference. It is important for us to be well informed about gravity of this proposal and its threat to the dignity of human life.

Prayer and fasting are the most important and most powerful means at our disposal to defeat this initiative.

From now through election day, I encourage all Catholics to join with me in praying a daily rosary and fasting for the defeat of Proposal 3. We have the noble practice of giving something up for Lent. Now let us embrace that spiritual practice to give up something as a form of fasting for the defeat of this initiative.

In Christ,
+John F. Doerfler
Bishop of Marquette



Opposing Proposal 3

WEEK 3

For the past two weeks, we've been discussing Proposal 3 (the “Reproductive Freedom for All” proposal), and how it will amend Michigan's Constitution to create a startling broad right to abortion. In Week 1, we learned that the proposal's broad language (giving the right to “every individual”) authorizes a minor to obtain an abortion without parental consent or notice. In Week 2, we learned that the same would be true if a minor sought a sterilization procedure, and that the proposal would also authorize partial-birth abortion.

Proposal 3's supporters say that the State will still be able to regulate abortion “after fetal viability.” But that is grossly misleading. The proposal specifically allows abortion through all nine months of pregnancy—notwithstanding any contrary Michigan law—if an abortionist decides, in his professional judgment, that an abortion is necessary to protect the “physical or mental health” of the mother. As a legal matter, such a “mental health” exception is widely

acknowledged to be so broad as to justify abortion on demand until birth. An abortionist need merely document that the prospect of having a child is causing extreme anxiety and stress for the mother. And while Proposal 3 supporters say a judge won't have to allow such a broad exception, the proposal's language specifically requires courts to defer to the abortionist's “professional judgment.”

No matter how a voter feels about abortion, Michigan's Constitution should *not* be amended to allow abortion on demand through all nine months of pregnancy. Please tell everyone you know: vote “NO” on Proposal 3 on November 8th.

John Bursch is a constitutional lawyer and former Michigan Solicitor General. Through Alliance Defending Freedom, he represents the Michigan Catholic Conference and Right to Life of Michigan in court to uphold Michigan's pro-life laws.

Questions and Answers Regarding Proposal 3

Q: What would this proposal do?

A: This proposal seeks to add an amendment to the Michigan Constitution that would guarantee that abortion is legal through all nine months of pregnancy, with no limitations or regulations. Specifically, the proposal would:

- Legalize abortion at any time and for any reason.
- Allow teens to obtain abortions, contraceptives and sterilization without their parents knowing.
- Allow abortion to be performed by anyone—even those without a medical license.

Q: How would this change abortion laws in Michigan?

A: Michigan has several laws on the books that require parental consent and informed consent to protect women and children, prohibit partial-birth abortion and taxpayer-funded abortion, and require abortion facilities to be licensed and inspected, among others. Under this amendment, all of Michigan's pro-life 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.

Q: Why is this amendment being proposed?

A: This proposal was launched in anticipation that the U.S. Supreme Court would strike down *Roe v. Wade*. The Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* 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 and blocking laws from regulating abortion.

Q: How would passing this amendment compare to when *Roe v. Wade* was in effect?

A: 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 proposed amendment, those protections would be gone, and abortion would essentially be unrestricted and unregulated.

Q: How late into pregnancy would an abortion be allowed under this amendment?

A: The amendment would allow for abortions all throughout pregnancy. The amendment appears to allow a ban on late-term abortions, but it also provides an exception based on the mother's physical and mental health, in addition to protecting the mother's life. That means a late-term abortion could be justified for almost any reason.

Q: How would Michigan compare to other states if this amendment passed?

A: 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.

Q: Who is pushing this amendment?

A: Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union are the primary backers, with support from their national affiliates and out-of-state donors. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel also support the proposal.

Q: Who is working to defeat the amendment?

A: The official group dedicated to defeating the abortion proposal is called Citizens to Support MI Women & Children. That group is led by Michigan Catholic Conference and Right to Life of Michigan. MCC is working with each diocese in the state, who are in turn working with their respective parishes, to get the word out to every Catholic and encourage them to vote **NO** and to support the opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment. ■