

Record number of pro-life laws passed in historic Arkansas legislative session

By Tim Yarbrough

A number of strong pro-life measures were approved in what was one the busiest legislative sessions in Arkansas history – and solidified Arkansas’ position as the No. 1 pro-life state in the country.

In all, lawmakers approved 14 new pro-life laws to protect the safety of women and reduce the number of abortions in the state. The laws include an outright ban on abortions, a requirement for women seeking an abortion to view an ultrasound, prohibiting abortion providers in public schools, better regulations on drug-induced abortions, and measures barring abortions in hospitals.

Rose Mimms, executive director of Arkansas Right to Life, applauded the historic action of the Arkansas Legislature, saying it demonstrates how the state is winning the fight against abortion.

“It is so encouraging to have the enormous support for the protection of the innocent unborn and born vulnerable Arkansans that was reflected in this legislative session. The record number of pro-life laws passed was the result of a joint effort among pro-life organizations, lawmakers and our pro-life governor. It was a great success for life,” said Mimms.

Following are highlights

of pro-life legislation passed during the session:

Prohibiting Abortion SB 6 (Act 309) – A pro-life hallmark of the legislative session was the passage of SB 6 banning



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abortion in Arkansas, a bill prohibiting abortion in Arkansas except when the mother’s life is at risk.

The Right to Know and See Law SB 85 (Act 498) – A law that requires display of the ultrasound image and a verbal description of fetal development of the unborn baby to the mother before an abortion.

Abortionists in Public Schools HB 1592 (Act 820) – Keeping Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers out of Arkansas schools was the aim of HB 1592, which bars public schools from entering into any type of agreement or arrangement with an abortion provider. This includes any contact such as guest lecturer, curriculum or other contacts. The legislation will help keep groups like Planned Parenthood from promoting their programs in Arkansas public schools.

Transactions with Abortionists HB 1589 (Act 561) – A law that prohibits government entities in Arkansas from engaging in transactions with abortion providers and

affiliates of abortion providers. **Abortion Facility Regulations – Act 949** now requires any facility that performs abortions to be licensed by the Arkansas Department of Health as an abortion facility, as well as prohibits abortions in hospitals except in cases of a medical emergency. Another law (Act 740) requires abortion facilities to have transfer agreements with hospitals. Additionally, Act 787 requires the State of Arkansas to report abortion data to the federal Centers for Disease Control and tightens Arkansas law concerning abortion facility inspections.

Restrictions on Abortion-Inducing Drugs HB 1402 (Act 562) and **Informed-Consent to Chemical Abortion HB 1572 (Act 560)** – These laws update Arkansas’ restrictions on abortion-inducing drugs like RU-486 and outline the

informed-consent process for a chemical abortion.

Every Mom Matters Act (EMMA) HB 1195 (Act 90) – A law ensuring that women are offered information, assistance, and resources that could help them choose an option besides abortion and possibly reduce abortion in Arkansas by a third.

Codifying the 2015 Governor’s Executive Order Prohibiting Abortion Providers from Receiving Medicaid Funds HB 1408 (Act 358) – Law that prevents abortion providers in Arkansas from receiving Medicaid reimbursements from taxpayers.

Unfavorable End-of-Life Legislation Defeated HB 1685/ HB 1686 – Arkansas Right to Life joined with National Right to Life, Euthanasia Prevention Coalition USA, Arkansas Advocates for Nursing Home Residents, the Catholic Diocese of Little Rock, Family Council, and other organizations to oppose and defeat two proposed bills that included elements that essentially usurped personal end-of-life healthcare decisions by placing those decisions with healthcare workers who are not physicians.

Editor’s note. Tim Yarbrough serves in communications and development at Arkansas Right to Life.