

## December 2023

Next month, the Illinois General Assembly will begin its regular legislative session for 2024. Life issues will probably arise.

Even early on, before bills are formally introduced, you as a Christian citizen can email or telephone those who represent you in both houses of the legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate. You could say something as simple as that *you and your family are pro-life citizens and voters in Illinois, so you urge your representatives to protect the unborn and provide no support to any legislative measures that enable abortion, the killing of unborn babies*. This information stands out as important for *all* members of the legislature, regardless of their party affiliations or their past voting records on these matters. To identify your House and Senate members, see the item just below. This item also provides guidance for filing a “witness slip” when a specific bill on which you may want to comment comes under consideration by a House or Senate committee.

There is a high likelihood that in 2024 the legislature will entertain a move to propose an amendment to the state constitution defining a fundamental right to abortion in Illinois. Such a proposal must be passed by three-fifths majorities in both houses of the legislature during the first half of the year before it could go before voters for ratification in the November general election. If abortion were to be recognized as a fundamental right in the Illinois constitution, it would prove difficult if not impossible ever to reinstate parental notification prior to an abortion on a minor, or to require licensing for abortion clinics. If put in place, such a constitutional amendment would be of towering importance, reducing still more the future potential for legal protection of the unborn in this state. Of course, legislators do not have to propose such an amendment in the first place, a point about which they can be reminded.

The 2024 General Assembly may also consider making an allowance for assisted suicide in Illinois. Legislators very familiar with debates on abortion might wonder what their constituents think about this related life matter. You can inform them. It is noteworthy that advocates for people with disabilities have grown quite concerned about assisted suicide, and understandably so. It might also be noted that Illinois has laws for suicide prevention; would new laws allowing assisted suicide sit well with the existing laws that attempt to prevent suicide? The law teaches. Would the state be telling people that suicide is good, or not?

HB 4133, already introduced and awaiting assignment to committee, would require religious schools to have a policy on bullying. Current law specifies that people can be bullied for their “sexual orientation” or “gender-related identity or expression.” So under the proposed HB 4133, for example, a religious school’s very teaching against transgenderism could be held to constitute an instance of bullying. If state officials made that determination against a

religious school, the matter would almost certainly go to court as a First Amendment case. But even if the school were to win such a case, the work entailed would drain time and resources.

A group called the Parents Matter Coalition is attempting to counter the interference of government in relations between parents and their children. It aims to place on the General Election ballot in November an "Advisory Question of Public Policy." The question, broadly stated, is whether parents should have to grant their consent before life-altering treatments are given to minor children. The question as proposed specifies "any non-emergency medical procedure, medication, pharmaceutical, or any gender modification procedure, gender identification counseling or gender therapy." Illinois Right to Life supports this advisory question. For it to appear on the November ballot, at least 500,000 signatures need to be collected by April.