

July 2017

## INSIDE

Potential victories ahead in special session

First and second year Fellows receive Pro-Life training



# *After revealing regular session, Texas Right to Life is poised for major victories in special session*

The regular session of the 85th Texas Legislature brought two substantial Pro-Life victories because of the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, the Texas Senate, and the tenacity of the Freedom Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives. Unfortunately, the regular session was also marred by duplicity, apathy, and obstructionism from the leadership in the Texas House. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick prioritized and passed life-saving legislation through the Senate in March, then he and the senators sought to revive Pro-Life measures killed by the House at the eleventh-hour, despite constant obstruction by the Speaker and his lieutenants. Furthermore, the 12-member House Freedom Caucus worked relentlessly to secure victories on the House floor through amendments and political negotiations. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick and the Freedom Caucus were instrumental for Pro-Life victories in the regular session and will continue to ensure more Pro-Life policies are passed in the special session that will begin on July 18, according to the call by Governor Greg Abbott. What follows is both a summary of the victories from the regular session and a look at what lies ahead during the special session.

## **Approved SB 8 with ban on dismemberment abortions**

In March the Senate passed the Dismemberment Abortion Ban, Senate Bill 415 by Senator Charles Perry; SB 415 was Texas Right to Life's top legislative priority. This critical life-saving bill prohibits the barbaric and gruesome practice of ripping a fully formed unborn child limb from limb in the second trimester of pregnancy. After receiving unprecedented support from 8,000 delegates to the 2016 Republican Party of Texas Convention, passing the Senate in March with every Republican's vote, receiving public support from Attorney General Ken Paxton, and having more than 70 representatives co-author the bill, Byron Cook singlehandedly killed the standalone Dismemberment Abortion Ban by refusing to even give the bill a hearing in the House Committee on State Affairs, which he chairs.

When Senate Bill 8, a different bill with Pro-Life principles, reached the floor of the Texas House on May 12, Pro-Life House members and the House Freedom Caucus circumvented leadership to strengthen SB 8 with life-saving amendments. Representative Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth) amended the Dismemberment Abortion Ban onto SB 8 by a vote of 92-42; Representative Matt Schaefer (R-Tyler) enhanced the current reporting requirements on abortion through an amendment

that won by 90-47; other life-saving amendments were also added that make SB 8 a truly life-saving victory. The amended version of SB 8, which mirrored the federal law on banning partial-birth abortion, established rules for fetal tissue research and the handling of the bodies of victims of abortion. SB 8 returned to the Texas Senate, where the chamber accepted the strengthened, amended version of the bill, marking a tremendous victory for the Pro-Life movement. On June 6, Governor Greg Abbott signed SB 8 into law, which will go into effect on September 1, 2017.

## **Two Pro-Life victories in the budget, one funding item added to special session**

Texas Right to Life and conservative representatives Honorable Mike Schofield, Matt Krause, and Matt Rinaldi spearheaded the Pro-Life efforts on the state's budget, Senate Bill 1. During floor debate in the House, Representatives Schofield and Krause increased funding for the state's Alternatives to Abortion program, a statewide social services network of adoption agencies, maternity homes, and pregnancy centers, established in every health region of the state. This program is currently underfunded and holds unpaid invoices from serving pregnant women and their children—both born and unborn. The SB 1 conferees moved the A2A increase to a contingency rider, authorizing HHSC to spend an additional \$20 million in funding once the allocated \$18.3 million is spent. This contingency will foster the current growth rate of the program, broaden services to more women and their children, expand into underserved areas, and increase the number of qualified providers who are currently waitlisted to join the network.

Representatives Matt Rinaldi, Matt Schaefer, and Drew Springer collaborated on a budget-wide patch to plug the holes through which abortion providers and their affiliates still receive state funding. By only limiting rules of specific programs, the state of Texas had been playing a protracted game of whack-a-mole with Planned Parenthood and their affiliates. The Texas House adopted a strong funding patch to disqualify all abortion providers *and affiliates* from taxpayer dollars. This most recent Conference Committee Report included the funding patch so that taxpayer dollars do not flow to the abortion mills and their affiliated clinics that refer women for abortions. This budget-wide protection marks another step in Texas Right to Life's plan to defund Planned Parenthood and the abortion industry in Texas. During the last week of the 85th Session, these two *Special session continued on page 4*→

# Supporter spotlight: Sandra and Gerald Ruggs

After just a few minutes of speaking with Sandra and Gerald Ruggs, one cannot doubt the genuine fervor they feel for building a Culture of Life. Take a few minutes and read through their interview to become inspired yourself to be a louder and more courageous voice for Life.

## Why are you Pro-Life?

As Christians, it is impossible to reconcile the destruction of innocent human Life with the Word of God.

## Do you have any Pro-Life memories or stories you would like to share?

My favorite is the video of Elizabeth McClung giving a small plastic fetus (baby) to a man outside an abortion clinic. When Elizabeth placed that baby into his hands, you could see the recognition of the truth clearly on his face. He could no longer ignore the fact that this is a child, a living person who is being killed.

## What do you value most about Texas Right to Life?

It is a package of characteristics, unwavering commitment and dedication to the cause of saving innocent lives, courage in the face of savage attacks from the opposition, clear and concise leadership from Elizabeth and Jim Graham in developing an incredible team, equipping them to be effective and motivating them to persevere through the hard times, frugal and conscientious handling of resources.

## What do you hope to see regarding Pro-Life Legislation?

Ultimately the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* and the end of legalized abortion in this country. Understanding this is a process, my top priority is to remove all tax payer funding of abortions, thus removing the guilt I share for the death of these innocent ones. I am also excited about the impact the Texas Right to Life Political Action Committee is having in removing RINOs that oppose Pro-Life Legislation.

## What do you hope to see regarding Pro-Life educational efforts around the state?

I am very disappointed in the lack of involvement by most Protestant churches. I understand that the primary focus and message of any church must be Jesus Christ, but there must be a platform within the Church that supports social justice in accordance with Christian/Biblical principles. Most of the churches I know of are afraid to confront such “hot button” social issues for fear of losing membership. My question to the Church is this “are we raising up members or disciples?” Our charge from our Lord Jesus is to “make disciples.” Disciples by definition must discipline themselves to abide by the tenets of our faith, which

referencing back to Jeremiah 1:5 would require us to oppose the taking of innocent human Life.

Mr. Google states “According to a 2014 study by the Pew Research Center, 70.6% of the adult population identified themselves as Christians, with 46.5% professing attendance at a variety of churches that could be considered Protestant, and 20.8% professing Roman Catholic beliefs.”

With 70% of the USA population professing to be Christian, it is difficult to understand how this culture of death has prevailed for so long. Since Christians should be the greatest ally of the Pro-Life platform, I would like to see more churches get involved in this fight.

## How has the Pro-Life movement affected your life?

Our modern age creates and requires a very focused and structured lifestyle in order to be successful in providing for and taking care of our family. While all of these things are good and necessary, they have very little “eternal significance” and the Pro-Life movement has provided a way for me to be involved with something that has eternal significance. Matthew 6:20 says “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

## Who in the Pro-Life movement has been an inspiration to you?

The short answer is everyone we have met with Texas Right to Life! Sandra and I enjoyed meeting and fellowshiping with everyone from Texas Right to Life. Your friendship means the world to us!

## How did you first get involved with the Pro-Life cause?

We became involved with Texas Right to Life in 2006 through Pastor Matthew Diehl in Round Top. Pastor Diehl invited Jim Graham to visit and talk with us about what Texas Right to Life was doing. Jim stopped by on one of his trips from Houston to Austin and we caught the vision. We have had active involvement with Texas Right to Life since then.

## What makes talking about Life issues to your friends/family/coworkers easier?

Getting involved. I encourage everyone to get more involved in Texas Right to Life. The more involved you are, the more information you absorb, the easier it is to speak concisely about the issues. Rubbing shoulders with all of the incredible volunteers and staff of Texas Right to Life is an inspiration and a joy.

# YOU empowered Dr. Joseph Graham Fellows to undergo continued training

The Dr. Joseph Graham Fellows wrapped up their first of three summer 2017 training sessions on Saturday, May 27. This week-long intensive is designed specifically for the “oldies,” those students who are in the second year of the Fellowship. On Sunday, 17 college students from across the state of Texas met at the University of St. Thomas to prepare for the difficult task of creating a Culture of Life on their campuses.

Throughout the week, students were educated by Pro-Life medical professionals, lawyers, and members of the media (just to name a few) in topics ranging from abortion and euthanasia, to litigation and legislation. Students were challenged to put their new knowledge to the test by engaging in Pro-Life dialogue with students at the University of Houston.



The Fellows visited the state Capitol the last few days of session to watch the House and Senate proceedings, receive a legislative update, and meet their state representatives.



At Brookwood, the Fellows and TRTL staff volunteered with residents at the home for people with disabilities.

When they were not busy learning or converting students who support abortion, the Fellows were able to discuss the challenges and opportunities they face as leaders in on-campus Pro-Life groups with one another. The Fellows exchanged ideas on topics including member retention, fundraising, time management, and event planning. Simultaneously, they helped one another find solutions to problems that arose this past year.

A partial class of new Fellows completed their initial training during the week of June 4. One additional training is set for later this summer and will be conducted for the remaining group of new Fellows. These students, with their knowledge of and passion for the Pro-Life movement, will conquer the difficult task before them. Though the fight to save those who cannot fight for themselves is fierce, the Fellows are ready.



Fellows also enjoyed lunch at the Brookwood Cafe, where many Brookwood residents are employed as servers.



Students pose with the Texas star at the state Capitol.

# YOU have helped Texas Right to Life open our first regional office!

As a statewide organization, Texas Right to Life is comprised of thousands of members in every corner of Texas. Our educational, legislative, and political efforts are blessed because of YOU, true Pro-Life warriors across our great state.

One area of the state is teeming with people who have a deep-seated desire to build the Culture of Life: North Texas.

In 2016, Texas Right to Life hosted the inaugural North Texas Celebration of Life and nearly 400 supporters from across North Texas joined to advance the Pro-Life cause. As North Texas residents, they constantly remind the rest of Texas that the deadly United States Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* originated in their area, and they take the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* personally.

In February of this year, thanks to YOU, Texas Right to Life opened our first ever regional office in North Texas. The Pro-Life movement has a fire in North Texas that will only be extinguished when preborn children and their mothers are no longer subject to the horrors of abortion and vulnerable



Rebekah and Daniel at Texas Right to Life's new North Texas office.

patients are not at risk of being euthanized by the draconian Texas Advance Directives Act.

The Pro-Life champions of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex are attacking *Roe v. Wade* from all sides. Our strongest Pro-Life legislators who pass truly life-saving bills are proud to call North Texas home. College campuses are being transformed by the work of dozens of Pro-Life college students led by our own Dr. Joseph Graham Fellows. Young adults are joining to stand for Life by volunteering their time to serve life-affirming agencies. Activists are engaging and equipping their church communities and social networks to protect innocent Life through constant dialogue, educational classes, and online activism.

We are excited to take the monumental step for Texas Right to Life through the opening of a regional office, and we are even more humbled to stand shoulder to shoulder with YOU. Pro-Lifers across North Texas fight daily to ensure North Texas' legacy of Life overshadows the death brought about by *Roe v. Wade*.

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←“Special session” continued from page 1

provisions had been stripped from SB 1. Again Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Senator Bryan Hughes, and the House Freedom Caucus successfully worked to restore these Pro-Life provisions in SB 1.

While the budget victories dictate that state funds may not go to abortion providers or their affiliates, Governor Abbott has added legislation to the call to prevent local governments from funding abortion providers through local tax dollars. This policy is the first of four Pro-Life priority items added by Governor Abbott to the special session agenda.

## Pro-Life Insurance Reform gets second chance following House failure

Although Senator Larry Taylor successfully passed Senate Bill 20 out of the Senate, Pro-Life Insurance Reform was killed in the House. Toward the end of session, Senator Taylor amended his SB 20 onto another bill about insurance reporting, House

Bill 3124, but House leadership ruled this amendment as non-germane and rejected Pro-Life Insurance Reform. Despite the sabotage by House leadership to bury this Pro-Life policy, Governor Abbott has added this bill as an agenda item for the special session, giving the Legislature a chance to redeem their past failure and pass this Pro-Life priority.

## Do-Not-Resuscitate bill is prioritized for special session after House sabotage

Dr. Greg Bonnen, a Republican representative from Galveston County, filed HB 2063 to explicitly require patient or surrogate consent in most circumstances before a Do-Not-Resuscitate order can be authorized for a patient. After months of delays, HB 2063 was finally heard in the House Committee on State Affairs. But Byron Cook waited four weeks to move the bill to the Committee on Calendars, where HB 2063 was intentionally set too late to pass. Governor Abbott, recognizing the absolute importance of patient or surrogate consent for a Do-Not-

*Special session continued on page 8*→

# *On the brink of a special session, Texas Right to Life PAC needs your help!*

The Texas Right to Life Political Action Committee (PAC) has been busy in recent months. As the political arm of Texas Right to Life, our PAC serves to elect staunch Pro-Life men and women into office.

## **Current activity**

In June, following the unexpected resignation of the Republican Party of Texas chairman, Texas Right to Life PAC endorsed James Dickey. A strong chair and fearless presence in the Texas Capitol to keep Republican lawmakers accountable to conservative principles has been missed from the Republican Party of Texas machine. The Texas Right to Life endorsement created quite a stir at the State Republican Executive Committee (SREC) meeting. Mr. Dickey won by one vote at a June meeting of the SREC, and Texas Right to Life looks forward to a bold new partner in the fight for Life.

Texas Right to Life PAC became involved in two local races—a race for Kingwood School Board and a race for the Plano City Council. Both races saw candidates endorsed by the anti-Life groups Planned Parenthood and Annie’s List. Luckily, robocalls from Texas Right to Life PAC helped defeat these two candidates from obtaining a foothold in Texas government.

## **The Texas Legislature**

After 140 days toiling in the halls of the Texas Capitol, and with four weeks of special session looming, the Texas Right to Life Political Action Committee—the arm of Texas Right to Life that engages in elections—is ramping up for primary election season. While Texas embarrassingly ranks as the 17th most “Pro-Life” state in the nation, the next round of primary elections for the state legislature will serve to ensure our standing increases after troublesome politicians are removed from office.

The Pro-Life gains during the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature were undoubtedly the result of the 12 legislators who comprise the Texas Freedom Caucus. A coalition of the most conservative—and some of the most committed to fighting for the end of abortion—members in the Texas House of Representatives pressed to ensure the passage of the Dismemberment Abortion Ban, resorting to amendments when the standalone bills were blocked by

House management, and working to provide a state budget that does not fund abortion mills or their affiliates.

The subversive maneuvers by the leadership of the Texas House of Representatives, who again killed Pro-Life legislation during the regular session of the 85th Texas Legislature, have left Texas Right to Life no option but to admonish those legislators afraid to buck the Machiavellian House rulers. Forthcoming endorsements from Texas Right to Life Political Action Committee, particularly for the upcoming Republican primary elections, will delineate those who sat idly by while Pro-Life legislation was purposefully killed, aka the RINOs or “Republicans-In-Name-Only,” from the champions who actively pushed for life-saving policies at every turn.

Texas Right to Life is committed to using all of our available resources to elect men and women who will unapologetically and tirelessly defend Life. This past session saw too many vital, life-saving bills killed by representatives who continually and successfully campaign on the basis of being “Pro-Life.” Our PAC is determined to hold such officials accountable to their constituents this primary season. We know that there is no room for political cowardice in defending Life. Our goal this election season is to clean House and defend the champions whom moderates will be targeting.

## **How can you help?**

You too can help ensure a stronger Texas for unborn babies. Three opportunities are the bedrock of political activism: donate, educate, and volunteer. Donate to candidates and independent organizations, like the Texas Right to Life PAC, helping to put boots on the ground! Be the boots on the ground by volunteering to phone bank or block walk (Texas Right to Life PAC coordinates ample opportunities all across the state). Educate your co-workers, your church family, and your friends about the positions taken by your local state representative and senator; the Texas Right to Life Voter Guide is an excellent resource.

To find the best way you can be a part of the upcoming election cycle, sign up at [www.TexasRighttoLifePAC.com](http://www.TexasRighttoLifePAC.com) or send an email to [PAC@TexasRightToLife.com](mailto:PAC@TexasRightToLife.com)!

***Innocent lives are counting on us to succeed!***

# Third Annual Permian Basin Celebration of Life a success thanks to YOU!



More than 150 Pro-Lifers in West Texas gathered for the Third Annual Permian Basin Celebration of Life in Midland on May 18. With only days left in the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature, event attendees were eager and appreciative for the in-depth update from the Texas Right to Life Legislative team as well as keynote speaker Honorable General Ken Paxton, the attorney general of Texas.

Texas Right to Life staff, board members, and family eagerly joined Pro-Life West Texans for the Third Annual Permian Basin Celebration of Life. The desire of West Texans to build a Culture of Life is as deep as West Texas is wide.



The Third Annual Permian Basin Celebration of Life was a success due in large part to Honorable Ken Paxton (second from left) and his daughter Abby (second from right) making the trip to West Texas to help advance the Pro-Life cause. Pictured here with Director and President Elizabeth and Jim Graham.



Making a fast turnaround trip to Midland from Austin, Elizabeth and Jim Graham were refreshed by the enthusiasm and commitment of West Texans to defend Life. They returned to Austin for the last ten days of the legislative session more eager to fight for Life.



Hailing from Ohio, Tanna and Rick M. have called West Texas home for four years now and love living in a city with so many Pro-Life friends.

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Resuscitate Order, has placed this reform on the special session agenda. With pressure from some anti-Life medical lobby groups, the question is whether House leadership will quickly move this life-saving measure or delay the bill again in the special session.

**Two other Pro-Life victims of the House revived by Abbott**

While these other bills were not Pro-Life priorities, House leadership did preliminarily move and then ultimately kill House Bill 2962, which would have codified reporting of abortion complications, and House Bill 1963, which would have prevented local governments from funding abortion providers and affiliates. Although HB 2962 was not a Pro-Life priority, the House Freedom Caucus and Senator Bryan Hughes strengthened the bill through floor amendments in their respective chambers. However, in a duplicitous maneuver at

the end of session, the Texas House killed the reporting reform. Governor Abbott has added this bill with the strengthening Hughes amendment as well as HB 1936, which the House slow-walked and scheduled too close to end of session deadlines, as two items for the special session agenda.

While the tireless work of the Senate and the House Freedom Caucus did secure substantial victories for the movement, Texas Right to Life is thankful that Governor Abbott is exposing the political games and deception of politicians who claimed to be Pro-Life while quietly killing Pro-Life bills. While not guaranteed, the special session gives the movement and elected officials another chance to pass two Pro-Life priority bills and other Pro-Life policies that will move us closer to protecting innocent human Life and creating a more just state for all Texans, including the vulnerable and ignored.

# Memorials and Honorary Gifts

**In Memory/In Honor of**

Dr. John McMurray  
Susan Whisner  
Warren S. Mathey  
Pauline Wiegand

**Given By**

Audrey B.  
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**Occasion**

Memorial  
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Please mail your contribution and this completed form to us.  
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9800 Centre Parkway, Suite 200  
Houston, TX 77036

Enclosed is our gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

*Thank you for your gift.*

100% of your gift goes into our scholarship fund to educate and equip the next generation of Pro-Life leaders. No part of your donation will be used for fundraising, overhead costs, or salaries.

Because of your generosity, new Pro-Life heroes are being trained on college campuses daily. Thank you.

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