ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR CATHOLIC CHURCH

Voter Education Session for Amendment #1



October 12, 2026



Opening Prayer

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
That I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
To defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
That I always may be holy.

St. Edward the Confessor, pray for us. Amen.

Why are we here tonight?

“Human life is sacred.
The lives of vulnerable women and their preborn children must always be welcomed, cared for, and protected.”

— The Bishops of Virginia, joint statement

Amending our state constitution means that it overrides any current or future Virginia statutes.

CATHOLICS & POLITICS

CATHOLICS ARE CALLED TO PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR AND PROMOTING THE COMMON GOOD.

THE CHURCH ADVOCATES FOR POLICIES THAT UPHOLD HUMAN LIFE AND DIGNITY.

THE CHURCH DOES NOT ENDORSE POLITICAL PARTIES OR CANDIDATES.

THE GOSPEL DOES NOT BELONG TO A POLITICAL PARTY.

- The Church guides the faithful in both private and public life by addressing moral questions about human dignity, justice, and the common good.
- Governments often address the same or similar moral questions through laws and public policy.
- Catholics have an obligation to bring their faith into public life, acting and voting for the common good with a conscience formed by the Gospel and Magisterium of the Church.

The **"separation of church and state"** limits government involvement in religion; but does not require the Church to remain silent on morality or public policy.

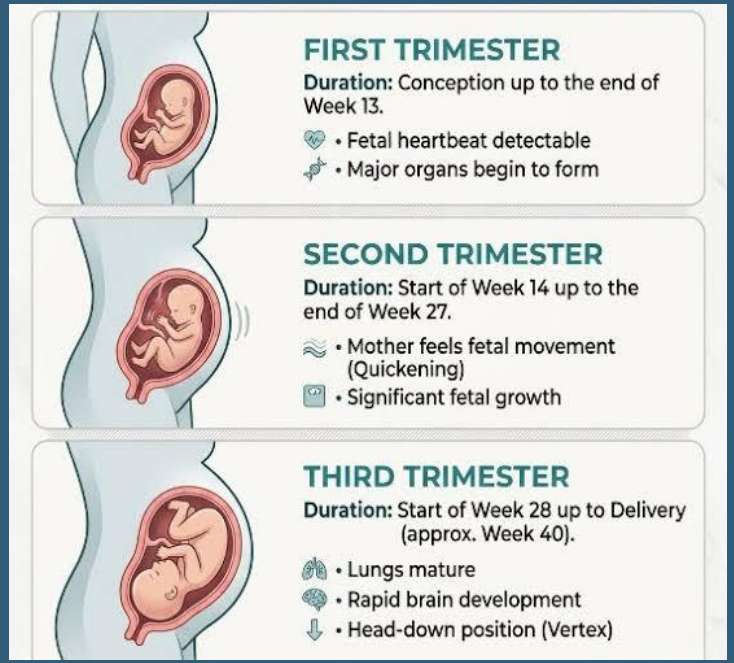
FORM YOUR CONSCIENCE
Scan the QR code or visit
usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship

64,000,000

Abortions have been performed in the United States
since the Roe v Wade decision in 1973
1.3 million Americans have died in all wars since 1776.

38,920

Abortions performed in Virginia in 2024



7 weeks

Fetal heart starts to beat

9-10 weeks

Spontaneous arm/leg movements

24-25 weeks

An unborn child has structures to feel pain and is sufficiently developed to survive outside the womb with medical support

Reproductive Freedom Amendment

1. Language on the Ballot
2. Language of the Amendment
3. Current Law
4. What a no/yes vote means

Language on the Ballot

Question: Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to:
(i) protect the freedom to make personal decisions about prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, birth control, abortion, miscarriage management, and fertility care;

Because the actual amendment gives the right to the "individual" not to an adult, it applies to minors too. That means a child could make life-altering decisions about abortion, pregnancy, or other reproductive services without a parent's knowledge or involvement.

Language on the Ballot

(ii) protect doctors, nurses, and patients from being punished for these decisions; and

This amendment would make it difficult for injured patients to get justice from the abortion provider, opening the door for Big Pharma and a no-guardrails abortion industry to exploit women for profit.

Language on the Ballot

(iii) allow for restrictions on access to abortion during the third trimester of pregnancy except when the patient's health is at risk or the pregnancy cannot survive?"

Virginia law already allows late-term abortion when three physicians agree the pregnancy would substantially and permanently harm the woman's health. This amendment removes that safeguard, leaving the decision solely to the abortion provider performing and profiting from the procedure.

Language on the Ballot

** Not mentioned in the ballot summary: the vague "reproductive freedom" language opens the door to:*

- *backdooring puberty blockers*
- *transgender procedures for minors against parents' will*
- *removal of any safety standards.*

While also omitting any guarantee that women can sue for malpractice or hold abortion providers accountable — and denying parents the clear right to help their daughter make life-altering decisions about her body and future.

2 Language of the Amendment

Language of the Amendment

Section 11-A. Fundamental right to reproductive freedom.
That every individual has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including the ability to make and carry out decisions relating to one's own prenatal care, childbirth, postp

"Individual" includes both women and men, kids, pre-teens, and minors. What happens to parental rights?

This is a sweeping, vague term. While offering what the right includes, It doesn't specify any limits, allowing for future expansion. E.g. Does your child have a constitutional right to sexual experimentation?

Language of the Amendment

An individual's right to
reproductive freedom shall not
be, directly or indirectly, denied,
burdened, or infringed upon
unless justified by a compelling
state interest achieved
by the least restrictive means.

Language of the Amendment

Notwithstanding the above, the Commonwealth may regulate the provision of abortion care in the third trimester, provided that in no circumstance shall the Commonwealth prohibit an abortion

Despite claiming to permit some third-trimester regulation, it takes away the state's ability to limit risky, up-until-birth abortions.

Language of the Amendment

(i) that in the professional judgment of a physician is medically indicated to protect the life or physical or mental health of the pregnant individual or (ii) when in the professional judgment of a physician the fetus
is not viable.

Current law requires 3 physicians to agree that a late-term abortion is warranted, not just one.

Mental health: Creates limitless exceptions, making it impossible to enforce reasonable safeguards.

Physician = anyone doing the abortion = those who stand to profit from the abortion industry, making them extremely biased.

Language of the Amendment

The Commonwealth shall not discriminate in the protection or enforcement of this fundamental right.

Which means this could:

- *kill parental consent laws by claiming they "discrimimate" against minors.*
- *Punish medical staff who say "no" to abortion.*
- *Open the door to taxpayer-funded abortions.*

Language of the Amendment

The Commonwealth shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against an individual based on such individual's own exercise of this fundamental right or such individual's own actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion.

- *Could prevent or deter investigations into suspicious or coerced abortions.*

Language of the Amendment

The Commonwealth shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against any individual for aiding or assisting another individual in exercising such other individual's right to reproductive freedom with such other individual's voluntary consent.

Offers inherent protection to any person who aids an abortion.
The language opens tot door to protecting unlicensed practitioners, abusive partners, traffickers, and predators. All shielded if there's "voluntary consent".
Voluntary consent could easily be forged.

Language of the Amendment

For the purposes of this section, a state interest is compelling only if it is for the limited purpose of maintaining or improving the health of an individual seeking care, consistent with accepted clinical standards of care and evidence-based medicine, and does not infringe on that individual's autonomous decision making.

i.e,, state interests to protect women is made secondary to "clinical standards" defined by abortion industry

The abortion industry sets the rules: the amendment locks in Abortion-lobby standards as the legal gold standard.

Language of the Amendment

For the purposes of this section, a state interest is compelling only if it is for the limited purpose of maintaining or improving the health of an individual seeking care, consistent with accepted clinical standards of care and evidence-based medicine, and does not infringe on that individual's autonomous decision making.

Almost all common-sense, safety protections would be struck down with this section. Eliminates any accountability for abortion industry.

3 Current Laws

Current Virginia Law protects the woman...

- Allows abortion at any stage to protect the health of the mother
- Prohibits any legal action against the mother who has an abortion
- Requires that abortion providers be licensed by the Board of Medicine in Virginia, whether they are a licensed doctor or an advanced practice nurse.
- Requires that second-trimester abortions be performed in a licensed hospital because these abortions are riskier to the mother.
- Allows third-trimester abortions if three different physicians certify that the abortion is necessary for protecting the life or health of the mother and the abortion is performed in a licensed hospital.
- Measures for life support are required in case the efforts at abortion fail and the baby is born.

Current Virginia Law...

- Has a conscience clause which protects doctors, nurses and hospitals who do not wish to perform abortions. Written consent is required prior to performing an abortion.
- Has no restrictions on abortion
  - in cases of sexual assault (rape/incest)
  - where the health of the mother is at risk
  - for reasons of gender of the baby, or developmental differences such as Down's Syndrome.

All the above protections for the mother and health care providers in current laws will be nullified if this amendment passes.

4 What your vote means

A “NO” VOTE MEANS

- Our laws remain as they exist today.
- Abortion remains available and governed by medical safety protocols.
- Abortions in the third trimester continue to require meaningful medical oversight.
- Women and children have legal protections in place.
- Abusers and predators face consequences.
- Parent’s rights are protected and intact.

A “YES” VOTE MEANS

- Existing protections for women and children are eliminated.
- Deregulates abortion and eliminates medical oversight requirements.
- Predators and abusers gain protections under the law and could make Virginia a hub for human traffickers.
- Parents lose the right to participate in their child’s health care.
- Accountability for abortion industry is eliminated.

Why the Bishops say we should vote no:

- This amendment is too extreme, is worded dangerously vague, and creates risky loopholes.
- Its passage opens the door to health risks for women, the loss of parental consent laws, and abortions for healthy women with healthy babies at any stage of pregnancy.
- It would allow a baby to die after an attempted abortion.
- It would allow people who are not doctors to perform abortions.
- Constitutional amendments are extremely difficult to repeal, and courts must interpret the law as written – including its loopholes. This amendment's language is intentionally broad, leaving key decisions to individuals with no independent oversight.

Questions?



“Let the little children
come to me,
and do not hinder them, for
the kingdom of heaven
belongs to such as these.”

—Matthew 19:14

Thanks!

See ProtectVirginia2026.org
For more information.

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