

Georgia Sees Back-to-Back Wins in Pro-Life Culture Wars

Score one—or two—for government in the South.

Pro-lifers are celebrating in Georgia this week with back-to-back victories: one from the fetus and another from the deathbed.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal just signed a law that protects pre-born children capable of feeling pain. Previously, Georgia allowed abortions for almost any reason through all nine months of pregnancy. Georgia now joins six other states that have passed similar laws to protect pre-born children.

“I am deeply grateful that Governor Deal has demonstrated his commitment to protecting the preborn by signing this measure, at least 1,500 babies a year will no longer be killed,” says Georgia Right to Life President Dan Becker.

The new law, HB 954 sponsored by Rep. Doug McKillip, goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2013. The law clearly establishes that Georgia has a “compelling state interest in protecting the lives of unborn children from the stage at which they are capable of feeling pain.”

That stage is now set at 20 weeks after gestation, which means no abortions can be performed after that, except in cases where it’s necessary to save the life of the mother, or to end a “medically futile” pregnancy.

“While this new law represents significant progress in saving lives, a last-minute amendment that allows doctors to end so-called futile pregnancies is a first step to establishing a eugenic policy in Georgia,” Becker says. “It opens the door to destroying babies doctors think may be less than perfect.”

Deal also signed a new assisted suicide law. The bill, HB 1114 sponsored by Rep. Ed Setzer, was passed in response to last February's decision by the Georgia Supreme Court that struck down the state's previous weak and ineffective law.

The old law only prevented advertising assisted-suicide services, but did not prohibit the procedure itself. The new law is effective immediately.

"Stopping the immoral and barbaric practice of killing in the name of compassion is the right thing to do," Becker says. "Any society that claims to value life cannot justify taking a life lest we risk establishing a public policy with its attendant expectation of a 'duty to die.' The Hippocratic Oath says, 'I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel ...' We should instead devote our knowledge and resources to helping people in desperate situations."