

Tennessee Physician Advocates for Pro-Life Amendment

The pro-life amendment to the state constitution, called a “modest” proposal by some observers, would allow the Tennessee State Legislature to consider laws regulating abortion within the state—legislative action currently barred by a decision of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

In a phone interview, Tennessee physician Dr. Brent Boles rattles off medical terms and statistics rapid-fire, as one might expect after more than two decades practicing medicine.

Bound4Life: It sounds like you are in a vehicle. Where are you traveling from?

Dr. Boles: I just participated in a press conference, where we stood in front of an unlicensed, unregulated abortion clinic in Nashville.

They recently had to call an ambulance because a woman had a respiratory arrest during an abortion, and they were totally unequipped to deal with it. Unfortunately, the clinic threw us off the property while we were still speaking to the media.

Right now, abortion clinics in Tennessee are exempt from any kind of licensure or inspection requirements. Women who are walking into an abortion clinic in Tennessee have no guarantee, no protection from the state, that the place they are entering is safe, clean, staffed by qualified individuals and ready to handle an emergency. And they're not.

Even nail salons have to be inspected to meet health standards. A woman who goes and gets a manicure in Tennessee is going to a facility that does more to answer to the state Department of Health than abortion clinics do.

This is not just about reducing the number of abortions, to save unborn children from losing their lives. This is about protecting the women of Tennessee, protecting their health and safety. It's why the "Yes on 1" team just released an ad featuring a 911 call from that very abortion clinic.

Bound4Life: How do you respond to critics who call this an extreme amendment?

Dr. Boles: My view is that the Tennessee Supreme Court's decision 14 years ago was radical and extreme. In 2000, Planned Parenthood sued the State of Tennessee and ultimately won.

The court's decision overturned three laws: one regarding informed consent, one requiring a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion, and one requiring advanced-stage abortions to be performed in a hospital where complications could be handled more safely.

These are all patient safety issues, about providing truthful, accurate information to women. Amendment 1 is designed to correct the mistakes that court decision made. When those who oppose it call us "radical" and "extreme," saying that this takes away women's rights, they are not telling the truth.

In fact, one video produced by the other side was just named "the most dishonest TV ad of the 2014 election season." The script itself is misleading, but worse than that, it conceals that the woman featured, named Tracey George, is **Chairman of the Board** for Planned Parenthood of Middle and East Tennessee.

Bound4Life: As a medical doctor, why are you involved in the Amendment 1 effort?

Dr. Boles: The longer I practice medicine, the more often I meet women whose lives really have been broken by the realization of what they've done once they've had an

abortion.

It has always troubled me that abortion has been institutionalized as a legitimate industry in this country. The abortion industry does not tell women certain established medical statistics:

- A woman who's had an abortion is 2.7 times more likely to later commit suicide.
- A teenage girl who's had an abortion is 10 times more likely to attempt suicide.
- Of those who have late-term abortions, 60% of those women will later have PTSD.

Most places do not have complete, accurate informed consent. If the ideal situation, according to the talking heads of this country, is for women to make informed choices—then give them the information.

Let them decide instead of hiding the truth from them. There's a reason why Tennessee has twice the number of abortions per capita than Kentucky does: it's easier and more profitable to be an abortionist here.

Bound4Life: How has prayer played a role in the effort for Amendment 1?

Dr. Boles: Some months ago, I recruited a group of six friends for a focused prayer effort. For the seven of us, each took one day of the week to fast and pray specifically about this amendment.

Many local churches are hungry for information, and they want their people to know about Amendment 1. Whether nondenominational, Southern Baptist, Church of Christ or Catholic, the response has been very positive among churches.

They don't see this only as an issue of what the State Legislature should or should not do: they see it as a kingdom

issue.

I've seen the power of prayer in my medical practice. Not long ago, a clinic refused to provide an abortion to a woman who later became my patient. She soon learned her stepfather was praying for exactly that to happen. Today, she has a healthy baby boy.

Bound4Life: You've mentioned personal encounters with patients as a reason for your pro-life views. What of the medical science on the question of when life begins?

Dr. Boles: The science on this issue is crystal clear. From the moment of conception, that pre-born person is a unique individual with unique DNA, that never existed before and will never exist again. Barring accidents of nature or illness or the intervention of man, a baby will be born.

Humanity is there from the beginning. A person's size, level of development or abilities are not what gives them worth. It's not like you're another species until the moment you're born, take your first breath and cry for the first time. You are human from the moment of conception.

Bound4Life: What would you encourage pro-life advocates in other states to do?

Dr. Boles: If they're watching this play out, they should be praying. Some folks involved are considering last-minute radio and television ads, so people could support that which is important—but prayer is more important.