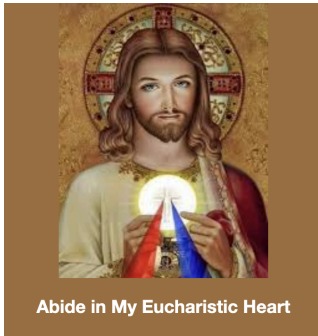


TASTE Reflection Questions
January 18, 2024



Maryland's Abortion Bill
Deborah Brocato

When you look at the Crucifix,
you understand how much Jesus loved you then.
When you look at the Sacred Host,
you understand how much He loves you now.
~ St. Teresa of Calcutta.



1. What did you find most interesting about this talk? Did anything surprise, disappoint, or outrage you about any of the four current laws in effect or the new Reproductive Freedom Amendment? Explain.

2. Each of the four laws and the one proposed amendment on the next page demonstrated a:

- Chipping away of parental rights and lowering of the age of consent
- Decrease in the quality and safety for medical care
- Increase in medical costs due to insurance companies being compelled to pay for elective procedures
- Obfuscation of the intent of the amendment followed by a denial of requested changes to clarify for voters
- Negative impact of crisis pregnancy centers due to high cost of defending litigation likely to lead to closures
- Loss of conscience protection for healthcare professionals affecting their livelihood with firings or other actions
- Loss of free speech

How did you feel about the impacts to date — especially on the most vulnerable?
If this trend continues, what else might be at risk?

3. Deborah shared some actions that are hypocritical. E.g., While they are reducing the age of consent down to 12 for medical decisions that have life long impacts, we see many examples of children being protected to much higher ages.

- Kids cannot take a Tylenol or an ibuprofen at school without parental consent.
- They cannot buy alcohol or cigarettes, enlist in the military, or drive a car until older.
- They want to increase the age in which a person is treated as a juvenile in the criminal justice system to age 25 because, according to the NIH our brains are not finished developing until we're around 25!

How do you feel about these positions being in such conflict?
In what ways do these examples help you to educate and defend this issue?

4. Deborah encouraged us to help defeat this amendment to enable Maryland to be the first victory in this nation-wide war. She highlighted some examples of what we can do that are captured at the end of the talk [summary](#).

What steps (large or small) can you take to help defeat this proposed amendment?
What information helped you feel more prepared to respond to discussions about this amendment?

Regulation	Description	Impact
Maryland Freedom of Choice Act of 1991	"The State may not interfere with the decision of a woman to terminate a pregnancy: (1) Before the fetus is viable; or (2) At any time during the woman's pregnancy, if the termination procedure is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman; or . . . the fetus is affected by genetic defect or serious deformity or abnormality."	Abortion is legal through all 9 months of pregnancy since anxiety is a reason for someone to be able to have an abortion. Parental notification for minor girls is determined by the abortion provider (Physician)
Mental Health Access Initiative of 2021	"A minor who is 12 years old or older who is determined by a health care provider to be mature and capable of giving informed consent has the same capacity as an adult to consent to consultation, diagnosis, and treatment of a mental or emotional disorder by [a] the health care provider or a clinic." "A health care provider may decide to provide information to a parent, guardian, or custodian of a minor under paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection unless the health care provider believes that the disclosure will lead to harm to the minor or deter the minor from seeking care."	Lowered the age of consent to seek Mental Health Care from age 16 to age 12. Yet our Marijuana Legalization Amendment legalized it only for those 21 and older! Removed the parents from the child's health care decisions at the discretion of the health care provider (physician)
Abortion Care Access Act of 2022	The abortion is provided by a "qualified provider" who is an individual licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by law to practice in the State. All health insurance providers must cover abortions without copays, deductibles or cost-sharing. A "special, non-lapsing fund" of \$3.5 million in the annual budget was established for the purpose of abortion training.	Removed the physician requirement for providing surgical and medical abortions. Parental notification for minor girls is determined by the qualified provider. Medicaid must pay for abortions.
Trans Health Equity Act of 2023	Nondiscrimination to provide all drugs and surgeries for "gender affirming" care, including puberty blockers Medicaid must pay for the drugs and surgeries	Minors included Amendments to exclude minors and require parental notification were voted down
Declaration of Rights — Rights to Reproductive Freedom	"That every person, as a central component of an individual's right to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one's own pregnancy. The State may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means."	Denied Amendment to: Change words person and/or individual to woman Exclude minors from the amendment Replace reproductive freedom with "abortion" Match ballot language to amendment language