

**SUBJECT:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY URGING THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA TO PREVENT THE USE OF TAXPAYER FUNDS FOR ABORTION.

**AGENDA OF:** June 20, 2023

**Assembly Action:** Adopted with Assemblymembers Nowers and Hale opposed 6/20/23. SP

**AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED:** Present to the Assembly for consideration.

Route To Department/Director	Signature	Comments
Originator	NS	For Assemblymember Bernier
Finance Director	x <i>Chapman</i>	
Borough Attorney	x <i>NS</i>	
Borough Manager	x <i>WZ</i>	
Borough Clerk	x <i>Sym 6/12/23</i>	<i>SP</i>

**ATTACHMENT (S) :** Fiscal Note: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X  
 Resolution Serial No. 23-072 (2 pp)  
 Letter to Gov. Dunleavy from Therese Syren (4 pp)

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:** This resolution is sponsored by Assemblymember Bernier to urge the Governor of the State of Alaska to prevent the use of taxpayer funds for abortion.

**RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION:** Consider resolution.

Dear Gov. Dunleavy,

The lives of hundreds of unborn Alaskans are in your hands. To save them, it is only necessary not to utilize our Alaska budget to publicly fund their murder by abortion.

The life of Jesus Christ was once in the hands of a governor. Like him, you are faced with a demand for innocent blood, because most Alaska legislators who were elected to defend the sacredness of human life have, instead, capitulated to the “Party of Abortion” from the very outset of the 2023 legislative session.

Republicans in both chambers created caucuses with Planned Parenthood operatives, killing the ability to pass any meaningful legislation about abortion. The Senate formed a binding caucus and prohibited the issue of abortion from even being discussed. The House formed a Majority Caucus that gave the abortion-activist Bush Caucus near veto power over what the Majority does (if the Bush Caucus leaves, the Majority dissolves).

Moreover, the House Majority voted to put Planned Parenthood-endorsed abortion activists in control of the House Finance Committee, which supervises nearly 70% of all bills and 100% of the budget. Of the 11 members, six were pro-abortion Democrats. Of the three chairpersons, two were pro-abortion Democrats. This is the riotous crowd that now demands your cooperation with a budget which may – once again – be used to pay for abortions.

To protect the lives of unborn Alaskans and their families from the resulting devastation, it is necessary to avoid – at all costs – the tragic error of Pontius Pilate. Like you, he was asked to supply the means for the execution of an innocent victim. Tragically, despite his sincere and profound repugnance, he finally handed Christ over, in order to quell a riot and so preserve his own political life.

By formally washing his hands, Pilate showed he was at least partially aware that his capitulation was inexcusable.

In addressing a different but related issue, the late Pope Paul VI wrote: “In truth, if it is sometimes licit to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil or to promote a greater good, it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that good may follow therefrom, that is, to make into the object of a positive act of the will something that is intrinsically disordered.” (Humanae Vitae #14 “Illicit Ways of Regulating Birth”)

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As much as he regretted doing so, Pilate did not merely tolerate Christ's torturous death, but made that intrinsically evil deed the very object of a positive act of his will, which he officially pronounced from the Judgment seat (John 19:13). The one who wills the means, wills the end.

Your own situation is not nearly as difficult as Pilate's. After all, the budget awaiting your signature does not demand state funding of abortions; strictly speaking it doesn't even permit them. It merely allocates general funds for the AK Medicaid Program, but there is no line item for abortions whatsoever. You can now either send the budget back to the Legislature and let them explicitly prohibit abortion funding, or you can use your executive authority to flatly refuse to spend even a single dollar to underwrite the murder of Alaska's prenatal children.

The major difficulty in your circumstances is that the Alaska Supreme Court is entrenched in the absurd opinion that our State Constitution not only permits abortion but also demands it be funded by our state Medicaid program. Furthermore, the courts believe the judicial branch has both authority and power to override both the legislative and executive branches of government. Pro-abortion politicians have built a house-of-cards defense for their outrageous policies on those outrageous opinions. Increasingly, even "pro-life" politicians hide their consciences from the light of reason in that flimsy house, using it as an excuse to neglect their duty toward unborn Alaskans, and even to aid and abet those who seek to end their lives.

Of course, our inalienable right to life originates not in any court but in "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," which the Declaration of Independence recognizes as the basis of all authentic government. Furthermore, the very first line of Alaska's constitution concurs with the Declaration regarding the right to life of every Alaskan. There is no reason, therefore, to wait for a constitutional convention, which is merely another deliberately specious or dreadfully mistaken excuse to do little or nothing for the three to four babies who are killed by abortion on a daily basis in Alaska.

We've heard the many excuses for inaction: "The courts will order funding anyway; the Dems will insist on funding anyway; we don't have the numbers ..." Using those excuses is like pleading innocent to serving on a firing squad for the execution of innocent persons simply because the court decided it's ok, a lot of trouble will ensue for those who refuse, and any conscientious objector who steps out of line will certainly be replaced by another. Key word, another; the objector's conscience remains clear. Furthermore, personal witness is all the more powerful in dire situations. Other members of the squad might well find the courage to follow a peer's example of refusal to make evil a means to one's own good. As their witness

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percolates throughout the body politic, that body will cease to tolerate the executions of innocents.

History confirms that faithfulness leads to the ultimate success of good ends, while infidelity actually increases the evil one is attempting to avoid.

In any case, it is impossible to avoid responsibility for doing an evil by citing the probability (or even the certainty) that someone else will carry out the evil if we don't. As Mother Teresa noted, "God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful."

How then are we to be faithful to the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God? From the Birmingham jail Martin Luther King Jr. articulated the principles that guided his own defense of human rights for the persecuted people of his day.

"[T]here are two types of laws: there are just laws, and there are unjust laws," King stated. "I would agree with St. Augustine that 'An unjust law is no law at all.' Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law, or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law."

Your defense of human rights doesn't require civil disobedience and incarceration, but it does entail the same moral courage which MLK Jr. exercised in his time. Natural law absolutely necessitates that we never do something which is intrinsically evil. Direct abortion is an intrinsically evil act which no circumstances or good end can ever justify. Therefore, funding direct abortion is also intrinsically evil. The rock-bottom duty of your office is to "First Do No Harm."

This responsibility remains even if your decision to block abortion funding is challenged.

Your steadfast refusal to use state funds to pay for abortions would constitute a quiet but tremendously strong witness to the Legislature. Like the observation that the emperor had no clothes, it would be a game-changer. Often, it's more difficult to stand up to our friends than our enemies, but after their initial shock, pro-life legislators will probably be as enthusiastic to support you as the crowd who knew – all along – that the emperor was naked.

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Furthermore, those who worked for your election would have the best of reasons to continue supporting you. Especially because Alaska has always drawn the attention and admiration of our entire nation. The witness of your refusal to fund murder would radiate like a lighthouse beacon to our entire nation. Whatever happens though, you must refuse to fund abortion just as you would have refused to pay for state-sponsored slave auctions in the antebellum era.

Christ has promised not to leave us orphans. He will abundantly provide to each of us through the Holy Spirit whatever aid is needed to carry out the good. He also gives us strength to avoid evil...provided we do not insincerely ask, "What is truth?" and turn from the Way, the Truth, and the Life to face a maddened world on our own. Persistence in that tragic course would seal the appalling legacy of Pontius Pilate upon yourself and any Alaskan "pro-life" legislators who accompany you.

"Whatsoever you do to the least of My brethren, you do to Me." (Matthew 25:40)

Therese Syren

Therese Syren is a long-time pro-life advocate in Alaska who helped found a local sidewalk counseling outreach outside an Anchorage abortion clinic. She holds a Master's Degree in Catholic Theology and a Pontifical Catechetical Diploma.

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