

Vander Plaats: Protect Life Amendment opponents not telling whole story

The following column by Bob Vander Plaats appeared in the April 29, 2021, edition of the Des Moines Register (links added):

Abortion advocates aren't telling you the whole truth about the proposed Protect Life Amendment to the Iowa State Constitution.

In their efforts to malign the Protect Life Amendment, abortion activists conveniently leave out the most important details: why the amendment is needed, and what can happen right here in Iowa if voters *don't* pass it.

Abortion activists don't tell you that without the Protect Life Amendment, the precedent is already in place for future courts to force third-trimester abortion on Iowa, all the way up to the day of a baby's birth. They don't tell you that without the Protect Life Amendment, Iowa taxpayers will almost certainly be forced to pay for abortions. And they don't tell you that thanks to a group of radical, unelected judges taking it upon themselves to rewrite the Iowa Constitution without even a peep from the people, we are already living – in terms of judicial precedent – in one of the most extremist, pro-abortion states in the country.

Abortion activists – and their friends in the media – tend to leave that part of the story out.

What's also left out is that Iowa's pro-lifers never planned for this amendment, but rather were pushed into it by radical, pro-abortion judges in 2018.

Three years ago, five judges on the Iowa State Supreme Court in *Planned Parenthood v. Reynolds* openly admitted they were ignoring the intended meaning of our state constitution, relying instead on their own read of society's "evolving standards," to invent a new "right" to abortion that could only be limited under the strictest standard of the law.

This strict-standard ruling went way, way beyond *Roe v. Wade*. Not even New York boasts a state supreme court ruling this radical. Iowa's five, unelected judges pronounced a precedent so extreme, it could effectively cancel every abortion restriction Iowa has ever passed or ever could. And even if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, it wouldn't overturn these judges' 2018 ruling -- Iowa could keep right on being radically pro-abortion.

No Iowan voted for this (except for five radical judges). No legislator ever got a say. And two dissenting supreme court justices blasted the ruling, saying it "ignores the text" of the Iowa Constitution and "forgoes accepted methods of constitutional interpretation."

Judges are supposed to be bound by the Constitution, not ignore it. But they did. And as long as the 2018 ruling stands, no law, no matter how commonsense, no matter how reasonable or widely agreed upon, stands much of a chance against the legal wall the court established. Five men in robes said they and they alone get to make abortion law in Iowa, and there's nothing you can do about it.

Nothing that is, except pass a constitutional amendment to correct their overreach.

That is exactly what America's Founders intended. When courts overstep their bounds in interpreting the Constitution, We the People can amend the Constitution to correct them.

And that's what the Protect Life Amendment actually does. It restores the original meaning of the Iowa Constitution and

gives back to the people of Iowa the right to discuss, debate, and determine reasonable limits on abortion.

It's possible that if the Protect Life Amendment passes, future Iowans may pass laws further limiting abortion. Or not. Iowa is not Tennessee. And even though Tennessee passed a form of Protect Life Amendment (like Louisiana, Alabama, West Virginia, and Rhode Island have also done) and then passed additional limits on abortion, Iowa doesn't have to follow Tennessee's path.

But without the Protect Life Amendment, Iowans don't get to choose our path. Five radical judges stole that right from us, paving a path for late-term and taxpayer-funded abortion without any input from Iowa's voters.

If you're OK with that kind of pro-abortion extremism, and if you're OK with judges ruling Iowa instead of the voters, then strike down the Protect Life Amendment.

But I question if you're OK with unborn children being snuffed out minutes before their first breath. I doubt Iowans support their tax dollars paying for elective abortions. And I don't think you're really OK with radical judges taking away our vote and voice.

So I ask you instead to join Iowa voters in restoring our constitutional form of government – and resuming the needed discussion over when a baby's life begins – by encouraging your legislators to pass HJR5, the Protect Life Amendment.

CLICK HERE today to encourage your legislators to pass the Protect Life Amendment!

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