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Bishop Hurley Encourages Support of Petition Drive to Prohibit Dismemberment Abortion in Michigan

SAGINAW — Last year, according to the state Department of Health and Human Services, there were 1,908 dilation and evacuation abortion procedures in Michigan. This gruesome procedure is generally conducted during the second trimester of pregnancy and requires the dismemberment of a human child inside the womb. A petition drive, organized by Right to Life of Michigan, hopes to gather enough signatures to amend the state's partial-birth abortion ban to prohibit this horrific dismemberment abortion procedure as well.

"I invite all people of goodwill to support this petition drive which would put an end to dismemberment abortion procedures here in Michigan," said Bishop Walter Hurley, apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Saginaw.

In the coming days, the Diocese of Saginaw will be sharing information with clergy and parishes, encouraging them to participate in the Michigan Values Life petition drive. It has full support from the Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) and Michigan's bishops. Information, including how to request a petition and/or campaign materials, may be found by visiting the diocesan website, Saginaw.org.

A second petition drive to take place in Michigan, which would prohibit any abortion after detection of a fetal heartbeat, is sponsored by the Michigan Heartbeat Coalition. This petition is being met with several concerns, and therefore not supported by the Michigan Catholic Conference. These concerns arise from the fact that all abortion is already illegal in Michigan due to a 1931 ban. That state law - banning abortion - currently lies dormant due to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. If that decision should be overturned, there are concerns that the heartbeat ban could be interpreted to create a conflict in the law and supersede the 1931 ban, actually allowing abortions up until a baby's heartbeat is detected. A heartbeat ban most likely would not go into effect until *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. At that point, the state's existing ban on abortion would again become enforceable.

"I remain grateful to all those who so tirelessly pray and work to end abortion," Bishop Hurley said. "We must continue to do all we can to change hearts and minds by lifting up the inherent dignity and rights of the unborn. May we also be unwavering in our commitment to support women in crisis or challenging pregnancies, and merciful in our support and care for those who have had or participated in an abortion."

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