

Heartbeat Bill Wrap Up and More!

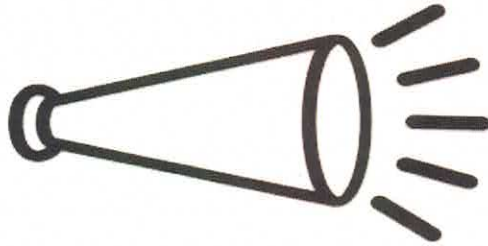
Florida Voice for the Unborn <Andrew@FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com>

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To: Andrew Shirvell <andrew@floridavoicefortheunborn.com>

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# Florida Voice



# For The Unborn

[FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com](https://FloridaVoiceForTheUnborn.com)

Dear Friend of the Unborn:

Last Thursday, April 13th, the final legislative proceedings concerning the **Florida Heartbeat Bill** concluded when the state House of Representatives took up the bill on the floor and passed it, 70-to-40 (unamended). Just hours later, Governor Ron DeSantis signed it into law.

Please find below a summary of those latest happenings concerning this long-awaited step in the right direction. And please also find further below **Florida Voice for the Unborn's NEW Grassroots Action Alert** regarding the "**Baby Box Bill**," which has stalled in the Senate yet again!

Building upon the Heartbeat legislative victory, let's continue to establish an authentic Culture of Life here in Florida by finally getting the Baby Box Bill across the finish line in the closing weeks of the 2023 regular Legislative Session, which does not conclude until Friday, May 5th!

## The Heartbeat Bill sails through the Legislature and lands on the Governor's desk in record time

The Heartbeat Bill was introduced on March 7th, the first day of the Legislative Session. A little more than five weeks later, it was signed into law. I am eternally grateful for all of Florida Voice for the Unborn's supporters who enthusiastically supported our campaign to amend the bill so that all unborn children, regardless of circumstance and gestational age, would be legally protected in Florida in this new post-*Roe v. Wade* era. Although the Heartbeat Bill ended-up not being amended the way we had worked and hoped for, we nevertheless accomplished a lot!

As I stated in my March 14th e-update outlining Florida Voice for the Unborn's Grassroots Plan of Action:

"As grassroots pro-life advocates, we shall remain engaged in the weeks ahead and, whatever the ultimate outcome of the legislation, stay true to our unwavering defense of all human life, from the moment of conception!"

Thanks to your exceptional engagement with all of our Grassroots Action Alerts, your testimonies at the various legislative committee hearings, and your prayers, Florida Voice for the Unborn was able to impress upon our pro-life Legislative supermajorities and Governor DeSantis that they have a moral obligation to protect all unborn children's lives, especially now that states actually can do so again after the historic overturning of *Roe v. Wade* last June.

I personally testified at all four legislative committee hearings, sometimes multiple times when bad amendments were introduced (and defeated!). I also live-Tweeted some of the committee proceedings as well as all of the floor proceedings in both the Senate and the House, calling out pro-abortion legislators and supporting our pro-life legislative champions.

Since March 7th, Florida Voice for the Unborn's advocacy efforts have continued attracting significant media coverage throughout Florida and nationally – in both liberal and conservative press outlets, including the *Orlando Sentinel*, *Tampa Bay Times / Miami Herald*, the *South Florida Sun Sentinel*, the *Florida Phoenix*, the *USA Today Network*, *Politico*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Florida's Voice News*, *The Florida Standard*, *LifeSiteNews*, Florida public radio stations, and local television news programs in the Orlando, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and South Florida metro-areas. For our March 2023 and April 2023 media archives located on our website, please [CLICK HERE & HERE](#), respectively.

I believe that sooner, rather than later, we will see comprehensive legislation introduced, debated, and passed, which will indeed make and keep Florida completely abortion free.

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On April 13th, as House members debated dozens and dozens of frivolous pro-abortion amendments to the Heartbeat Bill, the House galleries were cleared and closed to the public for the rest of the day – just like they were in the Senate the week before – when paid pro-abortion Antifa goons showed-up on charter buses to disrupt the proceedings, including by throwing things at House members. There could not have been a clearer contrast between pro-abortion

activists' misbehavior and Florida Voice for the Unborn's respectful and legitimate protests inside (and outside) the Capitol during our two big Days of Action last year. Plus we had way more supporters at our events than the pro-aborts could ever match!

Around 4:30 p.m. on April 13th, the House passed the Heartbeat Bill, with seven Republicans voting in opposition. Other Republicans (and some Democrats) conveniently missed the floor vote. The seven "Republicans" who voted against the bill were:

Rep. Mike Caruso (R–Palm Beach County)  
Rep. Rep. Karen Gonzalez-Pittman (R–Hillsborough County)  
Rep. Peggy Gossett-Seidman (R–Palm Beach County)  
Rep. Sam Killebrew (R–Polk County)  
Rep. Chip LaMarca (R–Broward County)  
Rep. Vicki Lopez (R–Miami-Dade County)  
Rep. Rick Roth (R–Palm Beach County)

Shamefully, Florida Right to Life's Political Action Committee endorsed Caruso, LaMarca, Lopez, and Roth for the 2022 General Election. Meanwhile, the Florida Family Policy Council's Political Action Committee had inexplicably endorsed Lopez and Gossett-Seidman.

Florida Voice for the Unborn may have to establish our own Political Action Committee in order to make sure that legislative candidates are vetted properly! I will be discussing this further with our Board of Directors in the future.

The signing "ceremony" for the Heartbeat Bill took place around 10:45 p.m. on April 13th, in Governor DeSantis' office. Although I knew the signing was likely imminent following the bill's final passage in the House, I was not invited by the Governor's office. This was not the first time that I've been excluded by "insiders" and the pro-life establishment following the transformation of the pro-life struggle that *Roe v. Wade's* reversal engineered. And I'm sure it will not be the last time I'm excluded, either.

But when I think of all the unborn children who face a horrendous, brutal death on a daily basis here in Florida, including those who have been purposely excluded from legal protection under the Heartbeat Bill, I recognize that Florida Voice for the Unborn's purposeful exclusion from the late-night bill signing is a small price to pay for speaking-up **for their lives** in an honest, forthright way. After all, I created Florida Voice for the Unborn back in January 2020 to shake-up the status quo – not to serve as a compliant cheerleader.

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There's a lot to unpack about the Heartbeat Bill and what it means for the pro-life movement here in the Sunshine State – too much, in fact, for this e-mail update. So, I'm in the process of writing a series of op-eds. Once they are published, I will distribute them via this e-list as well as via Florida Voice for the Unborn's social media channels. **But for now, here are three important points to keep in mind:**

**1)** The only provisions of the law that went into immediate effect following Governor DeSantis' signature were the ones expanding the role of, and

dramatically increasing the funding for, the pro-life Florida Pregnancy Care Network. Additionally, the provision authorizing a \$5 million appropriation to the Department of Health for its family planning program, which includes contraceptives and possible abortifacients, also took immediate effect.

2) All other components of the bill, including the prohibition of most abortions in Florida after 6-weeks' gestation, have NOT gone into effect – and will not take effect unless and until the Florida Supreme Court rules in one of several ways in the legal challenge to 2022's 15-Week Abortion Ban (nonetheless that ban has remained in full legal effect since last July). The legal challenge is ongoing: briefing in the case has not been completed nor has a date for oral argument been set. Consequently, a final decision from the Florida Supreme Court is months away. So, in the meantime, abortions up until 15 weeks' gestation are still legal here in Florida. Sadly, therefore, the daily, record-setting killing of our unborn brothers and sisters will continue throughout Florida in the months ahead.

3) If and when most of the Heartbeat Bill does takes effect, preborn children under 6-weeks' gestation will still be left unprotected, as will those children diagnosed (or misdiagnosed) with a fatal fetal abnormality (up until ~28-weeks' gestation) or conceived as a result of rape, incest, or human trafficking (up until 15 weeks' gestation). While we know from past statistics that abortions reported due to fatal fetal abnormalities, rape, incest, or human trafficking have been relatively rare, there have been tens of thousands of abortions reported every year in Florida that take place up until 6-weeks' gestation.

**The bottom line is that, as grassroots pro-life advocates, we cannot get complacent! We must continue to work on all fronts, including the legislative front, to MAKE FLORIDA TOTALLY ABORTION FREE!**

Florida Voice for the Unborn will continue to advocate for, and vigorously pursue, complete legislative protections for our unborn brothers and sisters. And we will not rest until every unborn child in Florida, from the moment of conception, is legally protected!

**NEW URGENT GRASSROOTS ACTION ALERT: Senate Bill 870/House Bill 899 (Baby Box Bill)**

The Baby Box Bill would incentivize local jurisdictions to establish state-of-the-art infant safety devices where newborn infants could be legally surrendered up until 30 days after birth. The legislation provides clear safety requirements and regulations for these devices, which would be appended to only certain authorized locations under Florida's current Safe Haven Law, i.e. hospitals, fire stations, and emergency medical service stations. Currently, Florida only has one Safe Haven Baby Box. Located in Ocala since December 2020, a newborn infant was surrendered utilizing this device (for the first time) just a few months ago.

The Baby Box legislation has gone before the Legislature in 2020, 2021, and now again here in 2023. Just as in the past, this lifesaving legislation is being held-up by vehemently pro-abortion Senator Lauren Book (D–Broward County). In fact, Senator Book, the Senate Democrat Minority Leader who was recently arrested in a staged protest against the Heartbeat Bill near Tallahassee City Hall, [told the South Florida Sun Sentinel](#) earlier this month:

“We’re seeing a gigantic movement right now of pro-life policy, Christian majority stuff coming out of our Legislature and I think this [Baby Box Bill] is a piece and a part of that.”

What I think, however, is that Senator Book is not only an anti-Christian bigot but a very vindictive person who wants to deny the babies another victory.

In the House, the legislation (House Bill 899) was assigned to the Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee and the Health and Human Services Committee. I testified in favor of the bill before both entities on March 9th and March 17th, respectively. Each subcommittee/committee passed the bill UNANIMOUSLY, with all Democrats voting with their Republican colleagues in favor of the bill. Likewise, House Bill 899 passed on the floor of the House on March 31st by a margin of 111-to-0. It was then sent over to the Senate and given to the Rules Committee, where it has sat ever since.

Meanwhile, the Senate leadership assigned the companion bill (Senate Bill 870) to three committees that Senator Book is a member of. On March 6th, the day before the Legislative Session officially began, I testified in front of the Senate Health Policy Committee, in favor of the bill. Following my testimony, Senator Book asked me a series of questions, which I easily disposed of. The bill passed, 7-to-3, with the other committee Democrats joining Book in opposition.

On March 20th, Senate Bill 870 went before its second committee of reference: the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee. This time Senator Book brought forth a number of amendments. On behalf of Florida Voice for the Unborn, I waived in opposition against all of them, except for one which I testified against (that absurd amendment would have placed the entire legal liability for any misuses of the box on the manufacturer, which would have essentially gutted the bill because no manufacturer would want to bear that risk). I also testified in favor of the main bill. Due to the absence of the Republican chair of the committee, the vice-chair (a pro-abortion Democrat) ran the meeting. Although all of Senator Book’s proposed amendments were defeated, the bill was advanced narrowly by a 4-to-3 margin, with all Republicans in favor and all Democrats again joining Book in opposition.

Senate Bill 870 has been awaiting its third and final committee hearing for almost a month now. And time is growing very short to get it (or the identical House version) passed through the Rules Committee and considered on the Senate floor! Senator Book has made dirty deals in the past to kill this legislation – and something again smells rotten.

What I am asking you to do is to contact the chair of the Senate Rules Committee, pro-life stalwart Senator Debbie Mayfield (R–Brevard County), and Senate President Passidomo’s office to get the Baby Box Bill heard ASAP in the Rules Committee or immediately on the Senate floor! Mayfield is a close confidant of Passidomo’s and is the one Senator, I believe, who could get this legislation moving again! So let’s do it!

**Contact Senator Mayfield, Senate President Passidomo, and their aides, expressing the following simple points:**

Please help continue to build a Culture of Life here in Florida by allowing Senate Bill 870 / House Bill 899 (the "Baby Box Bill") to be heard before the Senate Rules Committee. Alternatively, please bypass the last committee stop and bring this legislation for immediate consideration on the Senate floor. This lifesaving legislation passed unanimously, with bi-partisan support, in the House. It will empower local jurisdictions to join with Ocala in establishing state-of-the-art infant safety devices. The Baby Box legislation simply provides another choice for parents to safely and legally surrender their newborn child. Thank you for your prompt consideration.

**Here are the key phone numbers:**

Rules Committee Chair Senator Debbie Mayfield: **850-487-5019 or 321-409-2025**

Senate President Kathleen Passidomo: **850-487-5028 or 239-417-6205**

**Here are the key e-mail addresses (with semicolons separating them):**

[Mayfield.Debbie@flsenate.gov](mailto:Mayfield.Debbie@flsenate.gov); [Passidomo.Kathleen@flsenate.gov](mailto:Passidomo.Kathleen@flsenate.gov);  
[Lane.Kelli@flsenate.gov](mailto:Lane.Kelli@flsenate.gov); [McWilliams.Joshua@flsenate.gov](mailto:McWilliams.Joshua@flsenate.gov);  
[Nolan.Ian@flsenate.gov](mailto:Nolan.Ian@flsenate.gov); [Mackintosh.Andrew@flsenate.gov](mailto:Mackintosh.Andrew@flsenate.gov);  
[Betta.Katherine@flsenate.gov](mailto:Betta.Katherine@flsenate.gov)

**Here are the key e-mail addresses (with commas separating them):**

[Mayfield.Debbie@flsenate.gov](mailto:Mayfield.Debbie@flsenate.gov), [Passidomo.Kathleen@flsenate.gov](mailto:Passidomo.Kathleen@flsenate.gov),  
[Lane.Kelli@flsenate.gov](mailto:Lane.Kelli@flsenate.gov), [McWilliams.Joshua@flsenate.gov](mailto:McWilliams.Joshua@flsenate.gov),  
[Nolan.Ian@flsenate.gov](mailto:Nolan.Ian@flsenate.gov), [Mackintosh.Andrew@flsenate.gov](mailto:Mackintosh.Andrew@flsenate.gov),  
[Betta.Katherine@flsenate.gov](mailto:Betta.Katherine@flsenate.gov)

Based on whatever works best with your own e-mail account, please cut and paste the addresses above into your "to" header in a separate message. Don't forget to include a subject matter, such as "Please Take Up the Baby Box Bill," and include the simple talking points above or any other points that you would like to communicate. Alternatively, you may click on each individual e-address above to send separate messages! If you'd like to, please feel free to Cc or Bcc my e-mail address when you send your message:

[andrew@floridavoicefortheunborn.com](mailto:andrew@floridavoicefortheunborn.com)

Thank you to everyone for all of your amazing support of Florida Voice for the Unborn's mission and work during this Legislative Session and throughout the past few years! We would not be able to accomplish anything without your ongoing, faithful engagement and generous financial assistance.

Please consider donating to Florida Voice for the Unborn via our secure website by [CLICKING HERE](#), or sending a check (made out to "Florida Voice for the Unborn") to the following address:

**Florida Voice for the Unborn  
P.O. Box 12152  
Tallahassee, FL 32317**

Together, we shall remain a LOUD voice for ALL of our voiceless unborn

brothers and sisters!

P.S. Don't forget to take action ASAP on the Baby Box Bill legislation by contacting the elected officials above (and their staff members). We cannot give an inch to Senator Book and her pro-Culture of Death cohorts!

For Their Lives,



Andrew Shirvell, J.D.  
Founder & Executive Director  
Florida Voice for the Unborn

Florida Voice for the Unborn is a Tallahassee-based grassroots lobbying group that only focuses on pro-life issues impacting the unborn. It is strictly independent, and its work is guided by faith in God's only Son, Jesus Christ. Florida Voice for the Unborn supports all peaceful efforts by elected officials and others to end abortion and save lives. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Parler, and YouTube @UnbornVoiceFL – and visit our website [HERE](#).



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P.O. Box 12152  
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