



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

### Virginia Abortion Bill

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Sisterhood, Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools, Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey in the Commonwealth of Virginia

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14)*

My Beloved in the Lord,

In just a brief span of time our nation has seen two abortion bills: one in the state of New York, supported by its Legislature and Governor, which become law in what can only be described as a sinful, immoral, and illogical act which seeks to ignore both the laws of God and the laws of basic human decency and the other bill submitted to the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia which similarly mirrored the elements of the bill the state of New York passed. These heinous bills have been promoted by some as championing women’s health and rights, but make no mistake that these are contrary to the Gospel of Christ which is the Gospel of Life, the Gospel of Peace, the Gospel of Hope, the Gospel of Joy, and the Gospel of Love.

The changes in the new bill being considered in the Virginia House enabled someone to procure an abortion during the last three months of their pregnancy up until the moment of the birth if the doctor feels the mother’s life is in danger or if the doctor believes the pregnancy might impair the mother’s mental or physical health without, however, defining what constitutes the word “impair”. The suspicious nature of the bill is further revealed when one learns that instead of three doctors making this determination, as it was mandated in the former statutes of the law, the current bill limited this to only one doctor who could make this determination. Finally, for abortions that take place during the second trimester, the old law statutes called for the abortion to take place in a hospital for seemingly practical reasons whereas the new law would not require for the abortion to take place at the hospital.

The Orthodox Church has always held that when a mother's life is in sincere danger and the only way to save her life is through an abortion, an abortion is tolerable. If the argument, however, of those in favor of this bill is sincerely for the mother's health, then how can one allow for these procedures to take place outside of a hospital as is permitted in §18.2-73 of the bill? If a mother's life may seemingly be in danger, why would she be limited to having final decision of her health be determined by one physician instead of three qualified doctors as is dictated in §18.2-74.2 of the bill? It is obvious that the intent of this proposed legislation does not have the interest of the mother's health at heart.

By the Grace of God, the members of the Virginia House have suspended consideration of this bill, but it should remind each and every one of us that events in other states and in other countries have an effect on the social fabric and social consciousness of our local communities. We should view the temporary defeat of this bill in Virginia with joy, but we should remain cautious of other attempts to effect the same change to legislation which would make it easier to take the life of another person.

The issue of abortion is not an issue between left and right or Democrat and Republican. The issue of abortion is about recognizing personhood; recognizing that each person is made in the image and likeness of God from the moment of conception and that the Gift of Life is immeasurable. The issue of abortion is a major part, but nevertheless, just a part of the larger issue of how we approach life in all its forms, whether we are speaking of abortion, war, the death penalty, violence, euthanasia, proper palliative care, etc.

It is my sincerest prayer that each of you will reflect on this issue not as a political issue, but as a moral and Christian issue. It is my hope that you will reflect on the person of Christ, who is the Source of Life and whose desire for us to live was so great that He sacrificed Himself on the Cross. I implore you to remain vigilant and to pray for the unborn who were taken from this earth in an untimely manner. Pray for those who have not yet comprehended the Word of God and who perpetuate this sin. Pray for our leaders that they might be enlightened to that which is right. Finally, pray in thanksgiving to God that He has given us the Gift of Life and that we ourselves were not unjustly deprived of this great gift.

With Paternal Love and Blessings,  


† E V A N G E L O S  
Metropolitan of New Jersey