

Archbishop Lori praises West Virginians for ending taxpayer funding of abortion

WHEELING, W.Va. — The people of West Virginia have shown their devotion to the culture of life by voting to end taxpayer funding of abortion in the state, said Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, who is apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Voters Nov. 6 approved Amendment 1, which adds to the state constitution: “Nothing in this constitution secures or protects a right to abortion or requires the funding of abortion.”

“West Virginians told lawmakers that they stand for life through the passage of Amendment 1,” the archbishop said. “Their voices put an end to decades of taxpayer-funded abortions through Medicaid that have resulted in more than 35,000 deaths.”

He added: “The passage of Amendment 1 is just another way that the people of the Mountain State have shown their devotion to the culture of life.

“We must now resolve to encourage legislators to improve the well-being of mothers and their unborn children through the enhancement of Medicaid and other support programs,” he continued. “We thank all those who have worked so hard to help ensure the passage of Amendment 1.”

In October, the Catholic Conference of West Virginia’s executive director, Jesuit Father Brian O’Donnell, explained in a message that most states limit reasons for abortions funded by Medicaid but include Hyde Amendment wording on exceptions to allow them in cases where there is a “clear danger to the life of the mother” and in cases of incest and rape.

With the voters’ approval of Amendment 1 in West Virginia, a previous state law goes into effect that provides exceptions.

That law “allows for taxpayer funding of abortions in cases of medical emergency, reported rape and incest, fetal anomaly and threats to the life of the mother,” Mary H. Tillman, vice president of West Virginians for Life, said in a statement issued ahead of the midterm elections.

Following the voters’ approval of Amendment 1, Father O’Donnell said that he is happy West Virginia has become one of the many states that limit funding of abortion through Medicaid.

“I’m delighted to see West Virginia cease to be an outlier among states in its liberal taxpayer funding of abortions,” Father O’Donnell said. “I pray the state continues its strong support for the well-being of impoverished mothers and children.”

West Virginians for Life said the approval of Amendment 1 was a historic victory for the state’s taxpayers and the unborn. Before and following the passage of the proposed amendment by state legislators in March, the organization worked to educate people throughout the state on the facts of the amendment.

“West Virginians for Life thanks the people of the state of West Virginia for passing Amendment 1 to stop taxpayer funding of abortion on demand,” said Wanda Franz, president of the organization’s public action committee. West Virginians for Life is the state affiliate of National Right to Life; Franz is a former president of the national organization.

“We commend the members of the state Legislature for their courage in putting this amendment on the ballot,” she added.

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