

# MCC hails arrest of abortion doctors

The Maryland Catholic Conference is hailing the late-December arrest of two abortion doctors who were involved in a botched abortion that severely injured a woman at an Elkton clinic in 2010.

According to a Reuters news report, officials discovered 35 late-term fetuses in a freezer at the clinic following an investigation of the 2010 case. Steven Brigham and Nicola Riley have been charged with murder.

Nancy Paltell, associate director for respect for life with the Maryland Catholic Conference, noted that Brigham had lost his medical license in several other states. He was not a licensed physician when he came to Maryland, she said, “so any late-term abortions he performed here were illegal.”

In the 2010 case, the abortion was induced in New Jersey and the woman was driven to Maryland where laws on late-term abortions are more lax.

“He’s been wreaking havoc on women’s lives, not to mention all the viable babies that he’s killed,” Paltell said. “I’m just so pleased that this is finally catching up to him.”

Paltell speculated that the abortion doctors will be prosecuted under the fetal homicide law, a measure that was strongly supported by the Maryland Catholic Conference. They might also be prosecuted under the felony homicide law, she said, or some combination of the two.

“Someone who was not a doctor performed an illegal abortion and killed her baby,” Paltell said. “From that perspective, I can see where the fetal homicide law could possibly apply because here you have a person who was not a doctor who did a procedure and killed her viable baby.”

Paltell noted that the fetal homicide law does not prosecute women or abortion doctors for having abortions. It prosecutes those who kill viable babies.

“The Steven Brigham case certainly applies because he was not a physician,” she said. “He did something to these women that killed their viable babies. That seems to me an appropriate use of that statute. It’s not infringing on a woman’s right to choose a legal abortion.”