



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on November 30, 2011

New Pro-Life Amendment Drive Launched in Colorado

Proponents will need to get approval for the amendment from the Colorado Secretary of State, as well as about 79,000 petition signatures from state voters, in order for the amendment to make it to the ballot.

While past personhood amendment language has been confined to a one-sentence declaration that defines unborn children as persons under the law beginning at conception, the new [proposed amendment](#) states: "In order to affirm basic human dignity, be it resolved that the right to life in this Constitution applies to all innocent persons." The amendment goes on to declare, among other specifications, that the "intentional killing of any innocent person is prohibited," and that "no innocent child created through rape or incest shall be killed for the crime of his or her father."



As for the pertinent definitions, the proposed amendment specifies that "'person' applies to every human being regardless of the method of creation," and that a "human being' is a member of the species homo sapiens at any stage of development." Additionally, the amendment specifies that a "child" includes "a human being prior to and during birth."

In explaining the more detailed language, Mason recalled that in past initiatives, Planned Parenthood mounted campaigns against the amendment built on what Mason called "lies and scare tactics" that misrepresented the impact of the amendment. "The new personhood language prevents those falsehoods by making it absolutely clear what the amendment can and cannot do," explained Mason, "while still protecting every child from his or her earliest stages."

As reported by [The New American](#), a similar amendment initiative fell short in Mississippi in early November, failing by a lopsided 58 to 42 percent margin. While proponents hailed the measure as a fail-safe way to completely ban abortion, some pro-life groups have consistently opposed such amendments on the grounds that not only would they not put a stop to abortions, but, as reported by [LifeNews.com](#), "would perhaps give a pro-abortion dominated Supreme Court or lower courts a chance to reaffirm the *Roe v. Wade* decision that allowed virtually unlimited abortions in 1973."

Noting the defeat of personhood amendment efforts in Colorado in both 2008 and 2010, Planned Parenthood spokeswoman Vicki Cowart told the [Colorado Statesman](#) that her group predicted a similar defeat for this amendment try. "Colorado voters spoke loud and clear in the 2008 and 2010 elections when they voted down the so called 'personhood' amendments by a 3-to-1 margin each time," said Cowart. "No means no, yet Personhood USA and Personhood Colorado continue to ignore the wishes of Colorado voters."



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Similarly, Democratic State Senator Irene Aguilar said the effort represented “more of the same from Republicans who want to take away women’s choices while leaving many mothers and families without the support they need. If this was really about protecting kids and families, we shouldn’t be slashing programs that help vulnerable mothers and kids. These groups have never been honest that their intentions are really about a single-minded effort to dictate the choices women can make.”

In an attempt to put a national spin on the issue while painting it as driven by extremist passion, Colorado Democratic Party Chairman Rick Palacio noted that GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney had come out in support of Mississippi’s failed personhood amendment. “Mitt Romney and his fellow Republican presidential candidates should know by now that pandering to the extremists in their Tea Party base doesn’t appeal to the average Coloradan,” declared Palacio. “And after the latest version of Romney said he ‘absolutely’ supports the radical efforts of Personhood USA and other extreme groups, he will have a lot to explain to Colorado voters. Then again, we should probably expect yet another Romney flip-flop.”

As in Mississippi, where Republican Governor Haley Barbour offered tepid endorsement for the amendment before admitting that he actually voted for it, Colorado’s GOP appeared uncertain as to how much support it should offer the newest effort.

“The Republican Party has long had as an important component of the party’s platform the protection of life and the unborn,” explained Colorado Republican Party Chairman Ryan Call. “But certainly there is often a difference of opinion within our party on how best to advance that cause.”

The amendment’s sponsors insist, however, that they have enough Colorado voters to pass the amendment this time around. “Between 2008 and 2010, we saw a tremendous increase — 51,000 additional people voted for life,” noted Gualberto Garcia-Jones, one of the amendment’s authors. “In 2012, we expect to continue this trend. New language and sponsors will continue to increase the odds in our favor.”

Jennifer Mason, a spokeswoman for Personhood USA, predicted that the amendment would gain the needed momentum for passage as Coloradans understood its implications. “The more people that learn the truth about this amendment, the more they’re eager to protect all human life,” Mason said. “We definitely are making progress.”

Colorado is not the only state in which pro-life leaders are working to place a personhood amendment on the ballot. Efforts are currently underway in Florida, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Nevada, and California to get initiatives on ballots in those states in 2012.

And, as reported by [LifeSite News](#), “Wisconsin pro-lifers have put forward their own personhood amendment.” The amendment, introduced by State Representative Andre Jacque, “must first be approved by two state legislatures in succession and then by a majority of voters,” reported the pro-life news site. Like the proposed Colorado amendment, the Wisconsin measure would define “person” in the state’s constitution to include “every human being at any stage of development.”

As in both Mississippi and Colorado, pro-life groups are in conflict over the measure. While one state group, [Pro-Life Wisconsin](#), backs the amendment, arguing that it would effect a ban on all surgical and chemical abortions, [Wisconsin Right to Life](#) warned that it would actually pose a threat to the unborn. According to LifeSite News, the group insisted that the amendment “would invalidate Wisconsin’s existing ban on abortion, which ... [will] kick in as soon as *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. They also say it would cost millions of dollars, with the likelihood that it would simply be overturned in the courts.”



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