

**DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**



(717) 657-4804
FAX (717) 657-1370
4800 Union Deposit Road
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17111-3710
Bishop'sOffice@hbgdiocese.org
www.hbgdiocese.org

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our Catholic Church along with many others who cannot tolerate the culture of death have worked tirelessly since the Roe v. Wade decision to end abortion. The Pro-Life cause has made progress as we see the number of reported abortions decrease each year. However, the passage of the Reproductive Health Act in our neighboring state of New York last week could change that.

After last November's elections, control of the New York state senate changed hands. Immediately, Governor Andrew Cuomo jubilantly announced that his Reproductive Health Act would be given top priority with the new legislature in January 2019. True to his word, on January 22, the 46th anniversary of Roe v. Wade - the tragic Supreme Court decision which made it legal to kill unborn children - the New York legislature passed the bill and immediately Governor Cuomo signed the bill into law, to a standing ovation.

This law is dangerous for women and is a death sentence for children. Under this law, abortion is now permitted up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. Children born at this stage of life are viable, that is, are routinely able to survive with medical care. This law also provides broad exceptions that would allow abortion up to moments before birth. It allows doctors and non-doctors to legally perform abortions and removes the protection of infants who are born alive during an abortion procedure.

Gov. Cuomo, who proclaims to be Catholic, did not just sign a bill into law; he signed the death warrant for countless, innocent babies, who can now be killed for any reason through all nine months of pregnancy. How heart-rending it is that these actions were met by many in the New York legislative chamber with resounding applause.

All people who understand the dignity and sacredness of human life are outraged by the provisions of this law. Now more than ever, we must stand together as a unified Church and pray for the mothers, fathers and children of New York. Now is the time to speak for the unborn and do all we can to peacefully advocate for their rights as human beings.

More than ever you and I must resolve to pray and to work peacefully, yet with firm determination, for the legal protection of the right to life for children in the womb. I pray you will join me in asking our Lord to protect these most innocent and now ever more vulnerable babies' lives.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald W. Gainer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Rev. Ronald W. Gainer