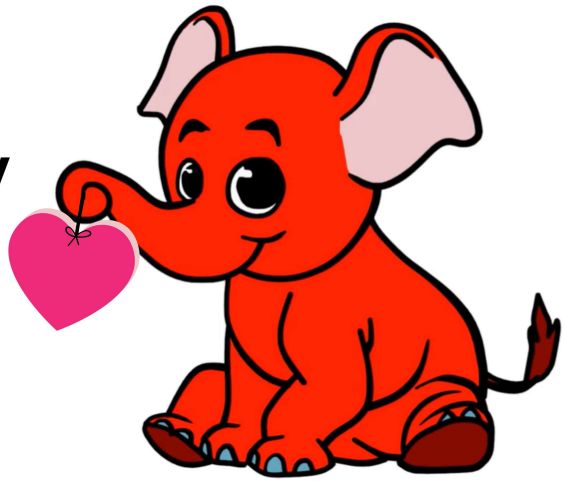
The Legislative Process: Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Raymond Mulholland

Greenville County Republican Party

Pro-Life Committee

Baby Ellie says: “Save the baby humans!”



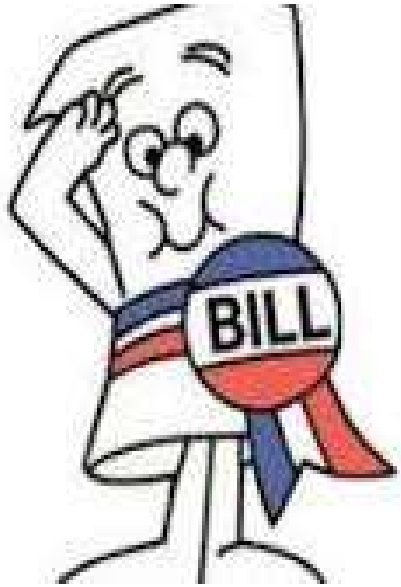
Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Bill Types

1) Those that would have a direct impact on saving the lives of the unborn

2) Those that are intended to make abortion a less appealing option

3) Those that address human dignity in matters other than abortion



Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Bills that Directly Impact Lives of the Unborn

1) The key word here is “direct” - the bill, if enacted, would explicitly allow or prohibit the taking of an unborn child's life

2) Under my direction, most of the legislative efforts of the PLC has been concerning these types of bills

-sending notifications to people to contact legislators
-attending hearings
-discussing them in public forums and private encounters



3) At the close of this year's session, there were 6 bills the PLC identified as having a direct impact on the life of an unborn child:

-H 3457 Human Life Protection Act (McCravy) - House Judiciary Committee
-H 3537 South Carolina Prenatal Equal Protection Act (Harris) - House Judiciary Committee
-S 1095 Unborn Child Protection Act (Cash) - Senate
-S 781 Life Begins at Conception Act (Leber) - Senate Medical Affairs
-S 783 South Carolina Prenatal Equal Protection Act (Bright) - Senate Medical Affairs

-H 4760 Abortion-Inducing Drug Prohibitions (Newton) - <u>SENATE</u>

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Bills Intended to Make Abortion a Less Appealing Option

1) Rather than address abortion directly, these bills seek to either remove excuses for having an abortion in the first place, or to make having a child a less troublesome experience
   -on one hand, many abortions do take place due to the woman being in a very bad situation
   -on the other hand, many bad situations are the result of poor choices on the woman's part



2) Under my direction, the PLC has mostly avoided discussing these bills
   -there is a fine line between a helping hand and a handout
   -many bills are socialist in nature, which would mean the bill is a socialist solution to a failed socialist solution
   -even the best bills cost the tax payer, and heavier taxes have never resulted in less unwanted pregnancies

3) There are many, many such indirect “pro-life” bills and laws, some examples include:
   -letting pregnant women use the handicap parking spaces
   -tax free baby supplies
   -letting fathers get paternal leave at cost to employer

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Bills that Address Human Dignity other than Abortion

1) Human dignity should be the focus of every bill and law, but Pro-Life is a very diverse field and some non-abortion issues fit well with saving children's lives

2) Under my direction, two such bills have earned our support:
   -H 5181 Egypt's Law (Jones) - House Judiciary Committee
   -H 4757 Parental Rights Act (Pope) - SENATE Committee of Education



3) HONORABLE MENTION: Daniel's Law (§ 63-3-820)
   -this law allows unwanted children to be surrendered to certain authorities
   -legislative and policy efforts to improve it periodically take place
   -this law has saved several lives, and is unquestionably a good law
   -BUT, I do question if tax money and efforts might be better spent in promoting the benefits of chastity before marriage, adoption, and other options
      --since its introduction in SC in 2001, only 77 were surrendered by end of 2025
      --8 were surrendered SC in 2025, tying the 2023 record
      --2026 has seen a sudden boost in surrendered children: 11 as of 3 October
         (Lindsey Clancy case may have influenced this sudden spike)

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
"Soft" and "Hard" Anti-Abortion Bills

"Soft" bill characteristics:

-H 3457 Human Life Protection Act (McCravy), S 1095 Unborn Child Protection Act (Cash), S 781 Life Begins at Conception Act (Leber)

-keeps abortion in the "Medical" section of the law

-may allow exceptions for abortion <u>other</u> than life of mother

-often willing to offer "bargaining chips" to get a bill passed

-will not assign culpability to the woman





"Hard" bill characteristics:

-H 3537 South Carolina Prenatal Equal Protection Act (Harris), S 783 South Carolina Prenatal Equal Protection Act (Bright)

-moves abortion to the "Criminal" section of the law

-no exceptions for abortion, other than life of mother

-reject "bargaining chips"

-wants the woman to be criminally liable for abortion, unless coerced

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
"Soft" and "Hard" Anti-Abortion Lobbyists

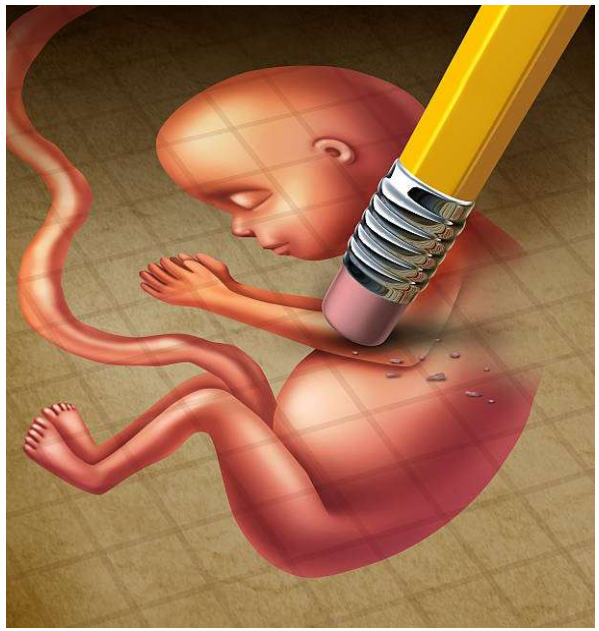
"Soft" lobbyist groups:
-South Carolina Citizens for Life (part of National Right to Life)
-Diocese of Charleston (part of United States Council of Catholic Bishops)
-Palmetto Family Council (Christian, non-Catholic)
Many lobbyists are perfectly satisfied with existing laws, and are seeking indirect methods to further end abortion
Soft lobbyists favor "incrementalism"





"Hard" lobbyist groups:
-Equal Protection
-Personhood
-both have or had bills named after themselves
Many lobbyists are uncompromising in their demands and take a "my way or the highway" attitude
Hard lobbyists favor "abolition"

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
Anti-Abortion Bills in 2026



As of the end of the 2026 Legislation Session, there were 5 bills that would have limited or eliminated abortion if enacted

- -only one (S 1095) made it past the sub-committee
- -none were passed by their home chamber

ALL FIVE BILLS, IF ENACTED, WOULD HAVE SHUT DOWN ALL THREE ABORTION CLINICS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The softest bill would still have limited abortions to pregnancies that were not detectable (10 days)

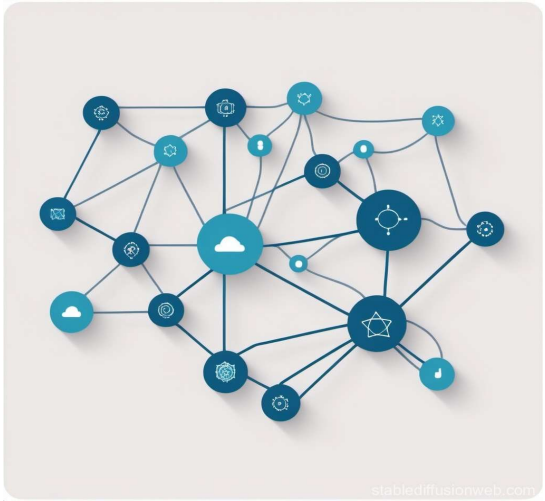
- -this means only “morning after” pills can be given to women who suspect they are pregnant
- -the clinics will not compete well against over the counter drugs

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
With All This Effort, Why Still Abortion in SC?

1) The only reason abortion is still legal in South Carolina is because of the divisions within the pro-life community

-"pro-life" lobbyists rarely support more than one bill, and some won't support ANY current direct bill (they prefer the indirect method of ending abortion)

-the math is simple: if any given bill only has 20% to 30% of the "pro-life" effort supporting it, then that means 70% to 80% of the "pro-life" effort is against it



Remember, the pro-abortion side is unanimous: 100% of them are against ALL five bills

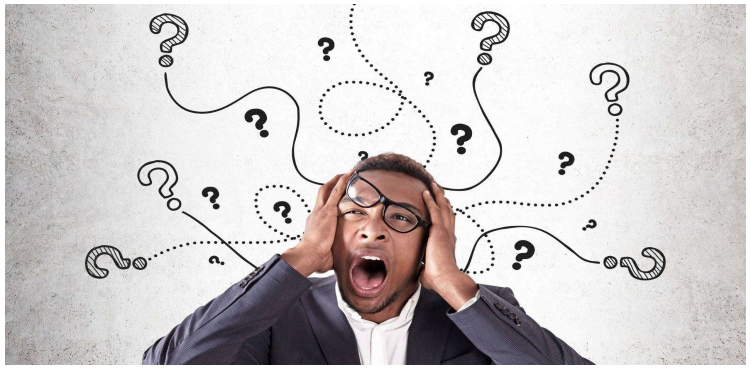
2) Abortion will only end in South Carolina when 70+% of "pro-life" lobbyists and/or churches stop siding with the pro-abortion lobbyists on any "direct" bill



"With friends like that, who needs enemies?" -- Joey Adams

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Why Won't the Lobbyists Come Together?



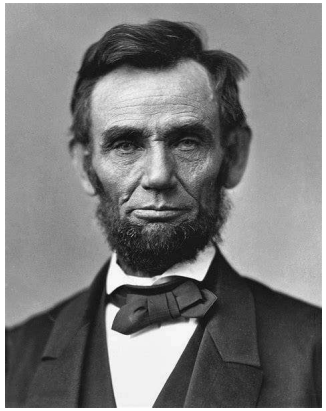
Each group has its own ideas of what it wants and refuses to compromise

The main practical reason is confusing "goals" with "strategy," and *vice versa*

The main philosophical reason is whether or not to make the woman legally culpable for the abortion

-this is the single greatest threat to ending abortion in South Carolina

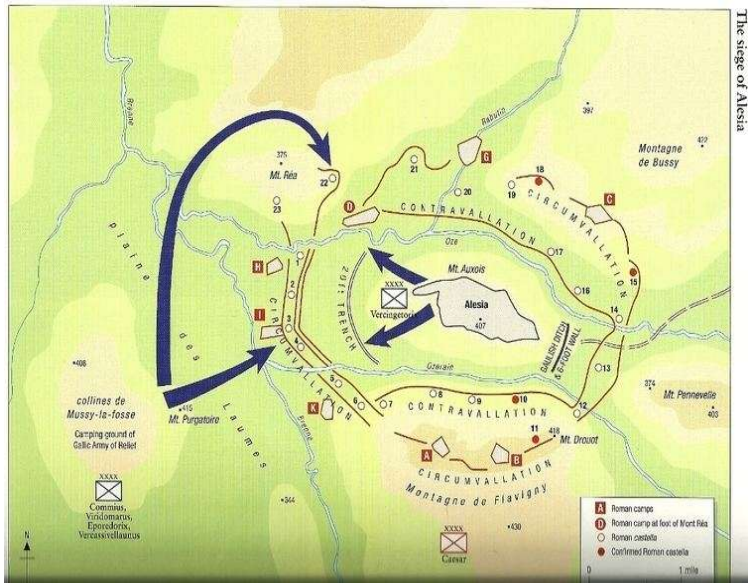
Issues of rape, incest and fatal fetal anomalies play a secondary, but important, source of philosophical division as well



"Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statues or pronounces decisions. He makes statues and decision possible or impossible to be executed." -- Abraham Lincoln

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
Goals vs Strategy





The siege of Alesia

A “goal” is the desired outcome

A “strategy” is a plan on how a goal is to be achieved

<u>“Abolition” is a goal, “incrementalism” is a strategy</u>

“Incrementalism” without a goal results in no direction or purpose
-“Soft” lobbyists are often accused of not actually wanting to end abortion

“Abolition” without a strategy results in a “one chance” mentality, so it must be perfect
-“Hard” lobbyist are often accused of being out of touch with political reality

Unless and until we use incremental methods to achieve abolition, we will continue to help the pro-aborts keep abortion legal

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

Woman Culpability: the Great Divide

"Soft" lobbyist do not want to see the woman being prosecuted, "hard" lobbyists do

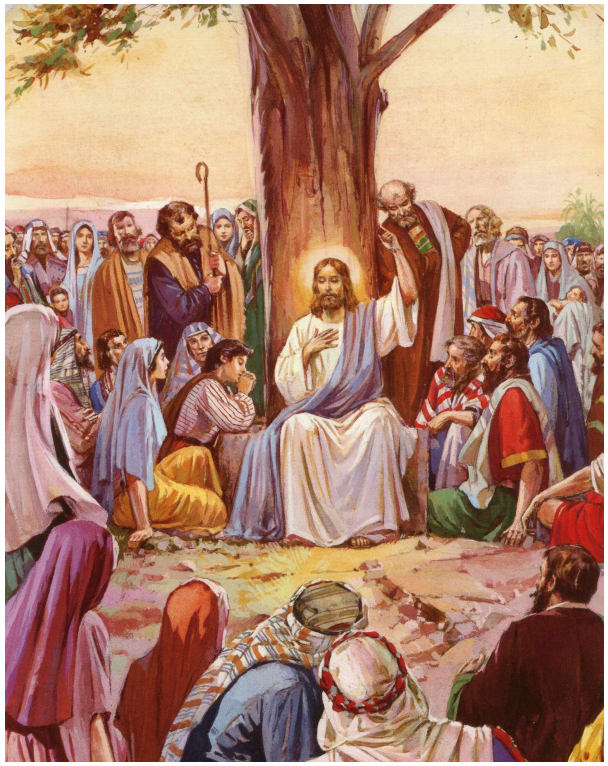
Many lies and misinformation have been spread by both sides concerning this

- -no bill will subject the woman to being retroactively liable to prosecution for an abortion
- -no bill prescribes the death penalty to the woman
  - --"hard" bills would move abortion to the criminal code, which recognizes different degrees of culpability and sentencing among conspirators
  - --S 1095 actually limits those performing or assisting an abortion to 20 years in prison, and limits the woman to 2 years in prison
- -bringing the woman to justice is not "revenge," it is justice for the actions she took
- -many women who get abortions know full well what they are doing at the time
- -"soft" abortion laws DO reduce legal abortion



Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
What Does the Bible Say?

Both sides use the Bible to support their position, and both sides are, in some sense, correct



<u>But the Bible is a complex set of works</u>, and one must incorporate all applicable verses, not just the convenient ones

Two verses come to mind concerning every lobbyist:

-"No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other." (Matthew 6:24)

-"Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!" (Matthew 23:24)

We are told that we will always have to prioritize our goals

We are also told that we need to seek the greatest good, or to at least avoid the greater evil

We need to ask ourselves if our love is for the gnat, or if its for the camel

Each and every excuse to not support a life saving bill is to love something more than saving a child's life

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
The "Soft" Lobbyist Love, pt 1

The main excuse "soft" lobbyists use is that it is cruel to put a woman in jail after all the pain and suffering she has already gone through



Similar excuses are given for rape, incest and fatal fetal anomalies

The suffering of the woman real, but note that it is an <u>emotional</u> excuse, not a <u>rational</u> one

Remember, everyone has a story!



Instead:

-hear them out, this gives them a chance to trust you
-after trust has been earned, the emotional barrier is often reduced or removed
-with emotions out of the way, logic and reason have a chance to be heard

"Cheep grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheep grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ." -- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
The "Soft" Lobbyist Love, pt 2

As emotions are very persuasive, one ought to have some "reality checks" to remain in control of the situation:



1) Abortion exists because Margaret Sanger felt women were already suffering too much, so why are we pretending that we can end abortion by employing the very same strategy that led to abortion in the first place?

2) These women do indeed deserve some mercy, but one can only employ mercy after judgment has been made

3) The Bible is overwhelming against favoritism in the law:

"You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment. Show neither partiality to the weak nor deference to the mighty, but judge your fellow men justly." (Leviticus 19:15)

-the Torah demands justice
-the Wisdom books glorify justice
-the Prophets warn what will happen if justice does not happen
-the History books confirm the prophecies were true
-Jesus and St. Paul defend justice frequently

4) Remember Lindsey Clancy

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists

The "Hard" Lobbyist Loves, pt 1

There is more than one common excuse from "hard" lobbyists:

-Perfectionism: the next bill is all or nothing, so it must fix all problems once and for all

-Revenge: when questioned about women going to jail, a number of individuals make it clear that they want vengeance on women, not justice

-Bible: the commandment "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17)

-William Wilberforce: he is often used as a model of what abolition looks like

-Doctrine of Double Effect, or some variation of it

--the third criteria, "The good effect must flow from the action at least as immediately (in the order of causality, though not necessarily in the order of time) as the bad effect." (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)



Unlike the "soft" loves, these are rational arguments, and can be debated logically

Unfortunately, many "hard" lobbyists are using faulty logic, and get very emotional when the faults are exposed

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
The "Hard" Lobbyist Loves, pt 2

The logic fallacies of their "loves" are easy to challenge, as they are not well thought out
-lobbyists often default to the Bible rather than actually defend their position

Perfectionism: nowhere in the Bible does it suggest that man can create a perfect world
- indeed, the entire Bible shows how every effort to do so has failed catastrophically (most notably, The Tower of Babel, Genesis 11)
-to wait for perfection really means waiting for the second coming of Jesus (in other words, this attitude equates to doing nothing)

Revenge: this is an emotional problem within their ranks, and not universal - the leadership needs to address it, or face the fact they will never be relevant in the pro-life movement because of the self-destructive message being sent out



Bible: "Cherry picking" the Bible is an absurd argument, one must take the Bible in its totality to truly honor it

William Wilberforce: <special Case Study at end of talk>

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
The "Hard" Lobbyist Loves, pt 3

Doctrine of Double Effect

-primarily used against allowances for rape, incest and fatal fetal anomalies

-recall: the third criteria, "The good effect must flow from the action at least as immediately (in the order of causality, though not necessarily in the order of time) as the bad effect."

-what they don't tell you is the first criteria: "The act itself must be morally good or at least indifferent." (ibid, underline mine)

1) The children the bill does not protect are going to die, regardless if the bill is passed or not (i.e., it is absurd to assume women who would have a child under the existing law would decide to abort it under this new law)



2) As those not protected are going to die either way, not protecting them is a "morally indifferent" act, not a "bad" act

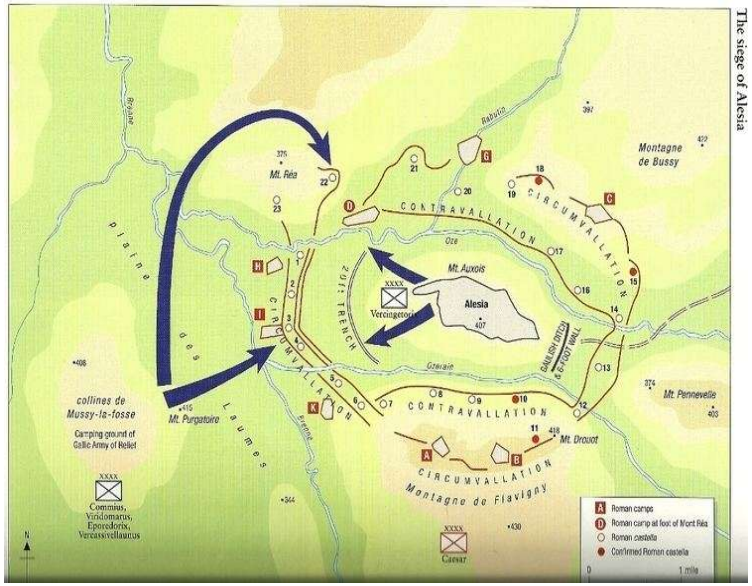
3) As there is no "bad" act from passing the bill, the Doctrine of Double Effect allows the bill's passage

NOTE: even without the concept of "moral indifference," this doctrine still allows for a "bad" effect to occur if independent of the "good" effect

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
Goals and Strategy Case Study pt 1

William Wilberforce: he simply <u>did not</u> suddenly end slavery through his prayers and willpower



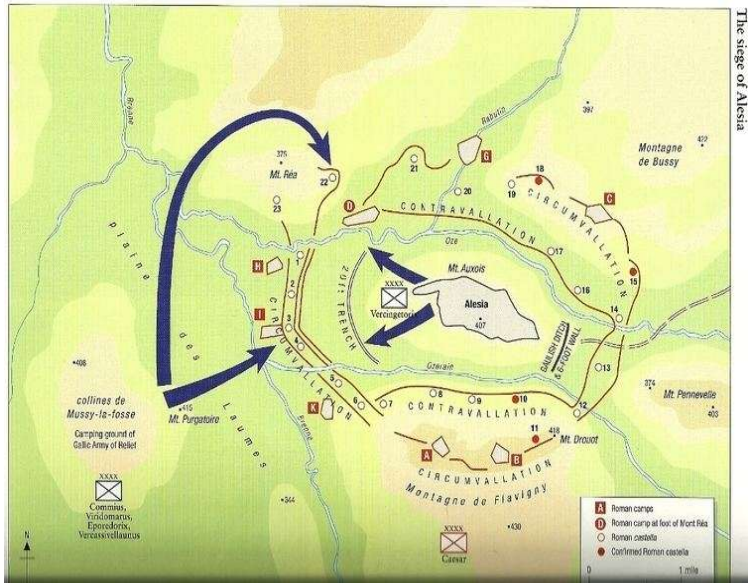


The siege of Alesia

-late 17th Century: Quakers began to debate among themselves on abolishing slavery
-1776: Quakers abolished slavery within their own communities
-1783: Popular anti-slavery movements begin in British Empire
-1787: Wilberforce began his own crusade to end slavery in the British Empire
-12 May, 1789: Wilberforce gave first major abolitionist speech to House of Commons
-1790: Quakers began to campaign to abolish slavery in US
-1791: Vermont becomes 14th US state, and became the <u>1st state without slavery</u>
-1 May, 1807: Slave Trade Act of 1807 bans <u>trading</u> of slaves in British Empire
-29 July, 1833: William Wilberforce dies
-1 August, 1834: Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 frees all slaves in the British Empire except India
-7 April, 1843: Indian Slavery Act abolishes slaves in India

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
Goals and Strategy Case Study pt 2



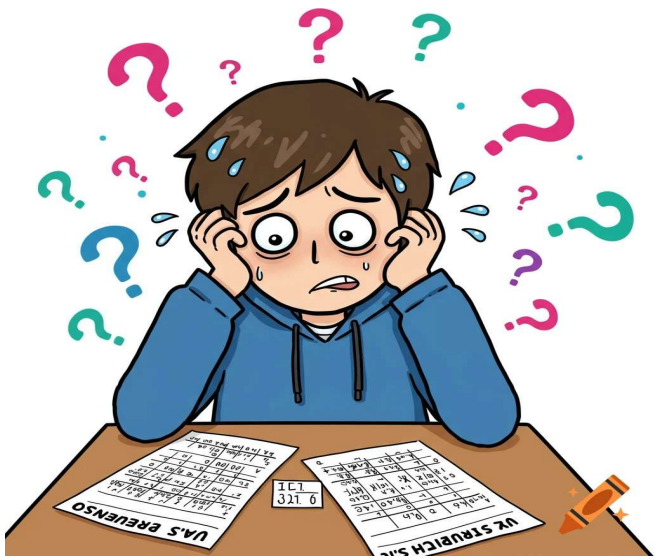


-20 March, 1854: The Republican Party is formed specifically to end slavery
-1 January, 1863: Lincoln makes abolishing slaves a US goal with the Emancipation Proclamation, but it does not include the 4 loyal states with slaves
-1 November, 1864: Maryland voluntarily bans slavery
-11 January, 1865: Missouri voluntarily bans slavery
-19 June, 1865: Texas last state to give up slaves under the Emancipation Proclamation
-December 6, 1865: the 13th Amendment frees the last slaves in English speaking lands*: Delaware and Kentucky
*Freeing of slaves in colonies England acquired after 1834 continued until 20th Century

This is how abolition ends: with a whimper, not a bang

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
Who To Believe?

In short: NO ONE



Although difficult in our hectic lives, one should always do at least a little research

Even when talking to a trusted source, be prepared to ask questions:

- -identify and challenge their assumptions
- -ask how they feel about other pro-life bills
- -look to see if they valuing something more than saving lives

Be suspicious of those who don't answer questions, who respond condescendingly, "cherry-pick" the Bible, and/or attempt to gaslight you!

Look at the opposition!

- -what do other "pro-life" lobbyists have to say in response?
- -look to see which bills the pro-abortionists are against!

If pro-abortionists are opposed to a life-saving bill, then why would YOU also want to oppose it?

Pro-Life Bills and Lobbyists
Questions?

