



## **Midwestern Pro-Life Advocates March in Chicago: “Ground Zero for the Fight for Life”**

*Thousands of pro-lifers from across the Midwest overflowed down Michigan Avenue in support of pre-born babies.*

“Welcome to the battleground, welcome to the resistance, welcome to the March for Life Chicago 2022,” said weDignify student mentor Dante Bucci to thousands of life advocates gathered at Federal Plaza on Saturday, January 8, before they marched down Michigan Avenue to publicly witness for the rights of unborn babies.

During the rally, a full line-up of speakers including Representative Avery Bourne (95th District), Pastor Chris Butler, Kelly Dore, and Sr. Alicia Torres encouraged attendees to speak out for life - to advocate, to teach others, and to serve mothers and their babies.

“Across this State and across the Midwest we are standing up for women, we are standing up for babies, and we are standing up for parents and children”, said State Representative Avery Bourne. “Unfortunately, the Governor and the Legislature did what they said they’d do, make Illinois the most radical state on abortion in the country. That hurts women, babies, and girls, not only in Illinois, but across the Midwest. Illinois is Ground Zero for the fight for life.”

Pastor Chris Butler, Senior Pastor of Chicago Embassy Church in Southside Chicago, Executive Leader of the AND Campaign, proclaimed, “When I think of all the black and brown babies that have been victims of abortion, I am compelled by love to be here. When I think about the late term abortions and the sex selection abortions that take the lives of little girls, I am compelled by love to be here. And friends I tell you, when I think about that harsh reality of teenage girls undergoing abortions without the consent and knowledge of their parents. A practice that makes it much easier for sex traffickers to cause their victims to forcibly get abortions, I am compelled by love to be here.” He called on the crowd saying, “We’ve got to fight and we have to create a culture of compassion and understanding and restoration in this pro-life movement.”

An Aid for Women client, Jowanda, shared about her experience when pregnant, “I initially wanted an abortion when I came to them, but they kept checking on me...And by the time my baby was born I had everything I needed. They helped me feel strong and empowered and they were always there when I needed someone to talk to. I hope more women are able to experience the same care and love that I did.”

“I am a wife, I a mother, I am a an international public policy advisory, a non-profit founder, I am sex trafficker survivor, I am Catholic, and I am unabashedly proud to say I am pro-life. It is not a political ideology, It is a human rights issue across the board...As a survivor of childhood trauma, we cannot sit here and say some lives are more valuable than others”, shared Kelly Dore, Founder of the National Human Trafficking Survivor Coalition; Director of Sierra Cares Foundation.

March for Life Chicago Director Kevin Grillot not only welcomed the crowd but announced a brand-new program to mobilize pro-lifers throughout the year. He introduced the “Pro-Life Builder” program saying, “Today we gather thousands of people from across the Midwest. Today is also the beginning of a new initiative to be a community of



pro-life builders. This initiative will funnel grassroots efforts and equip people to teach, serve, and lead in their communities. Because today marks the beginning of marching for life all through 2022.”

After the rally, participants publicly witnessed through the streets of Chicago, marching down Michigan Avenue declaring their commitment to save Midwestern lives.

*\*Photos and video from the March for Life Chicago 2022 are available upon request.*

### **March for Life Chicago Convention**

The outdoor rally and march were the keystone events of an entire day of activities that equipped participants how to teach others to change hearts about abortion, save and serve mothers and their babies, and be leaders in their local communities throughout the Midwest.

Participants arrived Saturday morning at the Chicago Hilton for a pro-life convention featuring educational breakout sessions, a youth rally, and an expo featuring dozens of pro-life organizations.

New to the March for Life Chicago, education breakout sessions (or workshops) featured qualified presenters addressing timely issues for today’s Midwestern pro-life advocates. Topics included:

- Parental Notification of Abortion presented by Amy Gehrke and Savannah Dudzik of Illinois Right to Life
- Illinois’s Sex Ed Law - what Parents Need to Know presented by Bob Gilligan, Executive Director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois
- How Illinois’s Abortion Laws Impact the Entire Midwest, presented by Dr. Steve Jacobs of Illinois Right to Life
- Abortion Pill Reversal, presented by Dr. Christina Francis, Board President of the American Association of Pro-Life OB/Gyns
- Sexual Trafficking’s Ties to the Abortion Industry, presented by Kelly Dore of the Sierra Cares Foundation and founder of the National Human Trafficking Survivor Coalition

Speaking about the Supreme Court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health*, Dr. Steve Jacobs said, “The same law which protects a born human should protect a preborn human. The same law which protects a preborn human from a violent or homicidal act by their father or a stranger should protect a preborn human from such conduct by their mother or a doctor.”

“As we face the real possibility that *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned in 2022, many are predicting that Illinois will become an ‘abortion destination’ for women in states without abortion access,” Jacobs explained. The Guttmacher Institute, Jacobs shares, predicts that if this happened then as many as 8.9 million women could travel to Illinois for an abortion.

Run by the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, the youth rally gave middle and high school youth the opportunity to receive pro-life training; hear from educational pro-life speaker Dr. Steve Jacobs; and be inspired by powerful testimonies.



University of Illinois student leader Sophia Pucillo told the teens about the light bulb moment when the meaning of abortion really hit her outside of an abortion clinic: “While we were there, I saw two or three cars go into the clinic, but I never saw them come out, and we were there for about an hour that day, so I assumed the worst and I felt hopeless. I came to recognize that if my worst thoughts were true, a whole life had ended at that moment. That is when I came to realize that every life from the moment of conception is whole, distinct, and unique. But abortion kills human life and ignores that fact, which is why every human life, because it is whole, distinct, and unique, deserves protection.”

Convention participants also had the opportunity to meet with dozens of pro-life organizations at the expo, including Illinois Right to Life, Lutheran-Missouri Synod, and many more.

***About the March for Life Chicago***

*weDignify, an Illinois based, pro-life organization that mentors college students into pro-life leaders, runs the March for Life Chicago in collaboration with many organizations. The 2022 event has over 20 sponsoring organizations, including Illinois Right to Life, The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and WSFI.*

*The March for Life Chicago is an annual public event composed of people from diverse ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds dedicated to defending and protecting all human life. The event marks with deep sadness the great tragedy of the legalization of abortion in the United States along with the devastating social, moral, and legal consequences that have followed. Marching together in hope, the March for Life Chicago calls upon government, religious, civic, and community leaders to renew every effort to build a nation that affirms the authentic dignity of women, the gift of children, and a culture dedicated to protecting life at every stage of development. Learn more at: [MarchForLifeChicago.org](https://www.marchforlifechicago.org).*