

From the desk of Tom Brejcha, Founder and President...

February 12, 2026

Dear Friend,

I write to you after returning from this year's March for Life in Washington, D.C., where our team from Thomas More Society joined tens of thousands of pro-life Americans massed on the National Mall, bearing prayerful witness to the inviolable dignity of every human being.

This year we bore a banner proclaiming the words that inspire and sustain our efforts: ***Every Life Deserves A Defense!*** That's a phrase worth contemplating... Both our Christian Faith and American heritage celebrate every one of us as endowed by our Creator with unalienable rights. Thus, we stand as equals before the law—whether we're gifted or flawed, admired or despised, even if allegedly “unwanted.” Each of us is special, deserving a ***vigorous defense***.

Yet, preborn human beings are still systematically bereft of even the slightest legal protection in too many parts of our country—a grim truth. That our pregnancy resource center clients—who advocate for these victims, offering expectant mothers help and support—are targeted and attacked is abysmal. Our mission at Thomas More Society is to defend these victims, their Moms and helpers alike, and to give them the vigorous legal defense they deserve!

The battles we're now fighting are formidable. Still bigger battles loom ahead. But marching alongside so many faithful Americans, and seeing the young and energized faces in the crowds at the March for Life, reminded me that we do not fight alone. Yes, every life truly deserves a defense, and lately we've been making some progress.

Feds rebuff Gov. Pritzker's Illinois: 'You've been breaking the law'

“I didn’t know. I didn’t know.” A grandmother sobbed those words at one of our client pregnancy centers, watching her teenage daughter’s ultrasound images. Decades earlier, she had aborted her own child at the same preborn age—nine weeks—told it was only a “clump of cells.”

Now, seeing her grandbaby’s flickering heartbeat, she finally had seen the truth. Then she embraced her daughter and promised to help her keep the baby.

Pasha Bohlen, the nurse manager at Pregnancy Aid South Suburbs, who has served women for 35 years, shared that testimony in open court. Transformative moments like these are precisely why Illinois has been trying so urgently to censor pregnancy centers like Pasha's...

For nearly a decade, the State of Illinois has waged relentless legal warfare against pro-life pregnancy centers and physicians (using a law called “SB 1564”), demanding that they either refer women for abortions or forfeit the law’s protection for conscientious objectors who oppose this wanton killing of preborn human beings.

Now, last month, at our urging, the federal government finally has weighed in—confirming what we have been arguing for many years. **Paula Stannard, Director of the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights, issued a ten-page Notice of Violation**, addressed to Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Attorney General Kwame Raoul, and state regulators.

The finding was blunt and unequivocal: Senate Bill 1564 plainly violates two bedrock federal conscience-protecting laws—the Weldon Amendment and the Coats-Snowe Amendment.

The Notice came in direct response to complaints that our Thomas More Society filed with HHS back in 2018—after years of pressing the Feds to hold Illinois accountable.

These are not obscure regulations. They are clear and explicit laws enacted by Congress to protect life, conscience rights, and your tax dollars, to ensure that no state receiving federal healthcare funds may discriminate against physicians, pregnancy centers, or other healthcare entities which refuse to refer for or facilitate abortions.

Put simply, the HHS Department administrators found that Illinois has been punishing pro-life doctors and pregnancy centers for refusing to refer for abortion. Illinois’ lawless scheme purports to grant healthcare providers a “liability shield,” protecting them against lawsuits and professional discipline, but doing so *only* if those providers agree to refer for abortion!

Illinois now has until February 21st to bring its policies into compliance with these federal laws—or else Gov. Pritzker risks the halting of Illinois’ federal healthcare funding!

Pritzker may dare to defy the Feds at HHS. But our federal court lawsuit would nip his defiance in the bud!

How has Gov. Pritzker responded on receiving word that the federal government has formally and finally ruled that SB 1564 (which his anti-life Attorney General Kwame Raoul has spent years defending in court) violates the rights of pro-lifers?

Pritzker’s media spin team dismissed HHS’s Notice of Violation as merely “another attempt on the part of the Trump administration to strip healthcare from Americans.” Illinois, his propagandists declared, “has led the charge to fortify fundamental reproductive rights” and “will keep working to defend against these attacks.”

One searches in vain for even the slightest contrition or hedge in the Governor’s response. There wasn’t even the least hint that his Administration might pause to reconsider the wisdom of coercing the conscience rights of pregnancy centers and pro-life physicians.

Consequences of such defiance could be severe. If Illinois refuses to bring its policies into compliance, it faces the potential suspension, termination, or limitation of federal healthcare funding. This staggering financial penalty would reverberate across the state's healthcare system, which is already economically strained and beleaguered!

Pritzker's intransigence underscores why our constitutional challenge against Illinois' crushing of conscience protections for pro-lifers, which is also still pending before the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, is now more vital than ever...

You see, the HHS ruling may be circumvented and political winds can shift. But a *constitutional victory* in the federal court lawsuit we had filed years ago would drive the final nail into the coffin of this unjust law—ensuring that no future Illinois Governor nor any later Administration could find a way to resurrect these conscience-crushing mandates.

Our Thomas More Society legal team has been litigating against SB 1564 for nearly a decade. Last April, we secured a critical victory when the federal district court struck down as unconstitutional Illinois' mandate that pregnancy centers and pro-life doctors parrot pro-abortion “talking points,” touting the supposed “benefits” of abortion!

Yes, that ruling was nothing short of a resounding vindication of fundamental First Amendment and free speech principles... But that victory was only partial.

In that same decision, the federal court also rejected our challenge against the state's unconscionable abortion referral mandate. *We disagreed, respectfully but vociferously!*

And then we promptly took an appeal to the 7th Circuit to overturn this odious abortion referral mandate, arguing the law turned the idea of “conscientious objection” on its head!

Thus Pritzker's bureaucrats in Springfield took Illinois' law designed to *protect* conscience and perverted it. They twisted that law into a weapon *against* conscience. They believed they could prevail if only by dint of sheer attrition—grinding down good and faithful pro-life Illinoisans with years of costly litigation, hoping we would grow weary and give up.

Not a chance! ***They miscalculated.*** With your continued support, we will see this fight through to its conclusion—on every front—until every pro-life doctor and pregnancy center in Illinois and elsewhere can serve women and children in good conscience and free from coercion!

Three States & 75+ groups and advocates rally behind our emergency appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court

As this letter goes to print, our emergency trip up to the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Mirabelli v. Bonta* case has been fully briefed and awaits the high Court's ruling, on its “shadow docket” (or “rocket docket” owing to the requisite high speed of such emergency litigation) as we hasten to protect parents and teachers from California's radical gender secrecy policies.

You will recall that last December, 2025, Judge Roger Benitez issued an historic statewide injunction blocking California from forcing schools to facilitate children's "gender transitions" ***in secret, without telling the truth to their parents, ordering teachers to lie if need be*** for the sake of such secrecy.

Secular state authorities had usurped the sacred role of parents!

California's Attorney General Rob Bonta took an immediate appeal, and three Judges on the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals "stayed" (i.e., paused) the enforcement of Judge Benitez's ruling and injunction for as long as it would take for the appeal to proceed to final judgment.

Just last month, in January, 2026, we raced to prepare and file an emergency application, urging the Supreme Court Justices to vacate that stay and restore the family protections that were decreed by Judge Benitez, while we continued to fight Bonta in the 9th Circuit appellate court.

The response from pro-family, pro-life, and religious allies across the country has been extraordinary. Three state Attorneys General—from Florida, Montana, and West Virginia—filed briefs urging the Court to act, warning that more than 1,200 school districts nationwide have adopted similar gender transition secrecy policies, encompassing nearly one-fourth of all public school kids across America.

A coalition of over 75 groups backed our plea for emergency relief: Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Moms for Liberty, Concerned Women for America, 14 state family policy groups—including former U.S. Attorney General Ed Meese III and former Sen. Rick Santorum.

Their message to the Justices was singular and unambiguous: parents have a fundamental right to know what is happening with their own children. California's scheme of government-mandated deception—requiring that teachers conceal from, and even mislead, mothers and fathers who ask about their children's well-being—not only violates that right but defies it.

Our 9th Circuit appeal continues, even as we await the Supreme Court's ruling on our emergency application to overturn the 9th Circuit "stay" of Judge Benitez's injunction. But if our case is kicked back down, we expect to return to the Supreme Court on the "merits," seeking ultimate vindication!

Thomas More Society will continue leading this fight until parents across America can once again trust that their schools will be partners, not adversaries, in raising their children.

Westchester County, NY demands that pro-life sidewalk counselors become mind readers, or face arrest and jail time!

For years, our pro-life sidewalk counselor client Oksana Hulinsky has stood on the public sidewalk outside an abortion mill in Westchester County, New York, offering hope to women in crisis—a kind word, a pamphlet about alternatives, or a "blessing bag" that might save a life.

Today, Oksana sits in her car outside that same abortion business. She no longer approaches anyone, offers literature, or speaks the words that once touched and changed hearts...

Barred from speaking, she does the only thing the County cannot forbid... *Oksana sits in her car and prays*. But what brought about this transformation?

Just days after the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the County enacted several pro-abortion laws, including one that criminalizes speaking to abortion-bound mothers outside an abortion facility, after a so-called "***implied request to cease***."

An *implied* request to cease?

Under this remarkably vague standard, sidewalk counselors are expected to divine a listener's unspoken thoughts or face criminal prosecution and up to a year in jail! Also criminalized is speech that "seriously annoys" another person.

But whatever that means is left to guesswork. County lawyers, pressed in court to define what "seriously annoys" means in practice, were in a fog. Merely walking around a sidewalk counselor, they claimed, could qualify as an "implied request to cease" speaking.

Asked whether a "blank stare" from an abortion-bound woman could properly be held an implied request to cease, County lawyers said this was a "*close question*." Thus Oksana had to guess right about what a stranger's silence signified—or else risk criminal prosecution. One had to guess what this law meant or else give up sidewalk counseling, which was precisely its intent!

Legislative history made this clear... One official complained that pro-life advocates offer "Trojan Horse gifts"—referring to blessing bags!—to create a "bridge" for conversation. *Horror!* Another disparaged pro-life counseling as a "gauntlet" of "intimidation."

Yet for all this rhetoric, Westchester County has never identified a single instance of unlawful harassment by pro-life advocates on its sidewalks. The County crafted a law designed not to address any real problem, but to flout the First Amendment and silence speech it disagrees with!

This is why we filed a hard-hitting appeal in the 2nd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to strike down this unconstitutional censorship law. We already prevailed against Westchester County once, last year, when a federal court ruled that another portion of this same law "criminalized large swaths of protected speech" and was unconstitutional.

With your help, we're now asking the federal appeals court to restore Oksana's right to speak, so that she can go back to reaching mothers in need and saving lives!

Your gift defends life, family & freedom on many critical fronts

We're fighting simultaneously in three federal appeals courts, defending conscience rights, parental rights, and the freedom to speak freely the message of hope to women in crisis...

Each of these battles, not to mention emergency litigation before the U.S. Supreme Court, costs resources. In **Illinois**, we're fighting to **strike down the anti-conscience abortion referral mandate** once and for all, even as we hold Governor Pritzker's feet to the fire after HHS's ruling that Illinois violated federal pro-conscience laws.

As for **California**, we're awaiting an emergency ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court to restore Judge Benitez's statewide pro-family injunction, as we're also **defending our historic *Mirabelli* victory** on appeal at the 9th Circuit, although we expect soon enough to be back before the Supreme Court for a final ruling on the merits for fundamental family rights.

In **New York**, we are fighting to restore Oksana Hulinsky's vital role, along with her fellow **sidewalk counselors**, speaking freely and kindly to women, saving countless lives.

Our opponents have the unlimited resources of government coffers and the backing of the biggest law firms in the world. California, Illinois, and New York will spend whatever it takes to silence pregnancy centers, usurp parental rights, and jail sidewalk counselors. We must be prepared to meet them, and beat them, on these multiple legal battlefields.

Will you consider making a sacrificial gift of \$1,000 or \$2,500? Possibly even \$5,000 or \$10,000? A gift in that range would be a tremendous blessing. Whatever you are able to give, know that it will be faithfully stewarded in defense of those who cannot defend themselves.

Could you please prayerfully consider a generous tax-deductible gift today to sustain these critical battles? We cannot afford to lose ground now... not when we are so close to victories that will protect life and family for a generation.

If a gift at that level isn't possible, could you consider sending \$100, \$250, or even \$500?

I also need many urgent gifts of \$75, \$50, and \$35, or whatever you can sacrifice. We will gratefully accept your generous contribution—no matter how small, no matter how large.

Most importantly, please pray for our work. Please pray for justice. Through your prayers and generosity, you sustain our mission at Thomas More Society and join with us in these ongoing battles for life, family, and freedom.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Brejcha
Founder and President
Thomas More Society

P.S. If you'd like to support our mission for the long-haul, please prayerfully consider making a Monthly gift commitment, which will automatically enroll you in our exclusive Defenders Circle. Recurring gifts like these are extremely helpful in sustaining our mission.