

December 10, 2021

Hon. Michelle Bachelet
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Amb. Nazhat Shameem Khan
President, United Nations Human Rights Council
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear Commissioner Bachelet and Ambassador Khan,

Seventy-three years ago today, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) envisioned a world where the “inherent dignity” and “equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” are fully recognized. As the largest federation of pro-life organizations in the United States, we—the National Right to Life Committee and its 50 state affiliates—have for decades pursued this vision through our work defending human beings in utero and supporting their mothers.

Yet in recent weeks, “human rights experts” from the United Nations have egregiously sought to infringe on the sovereignty of U.S. states to protect the human rights of unborn children. In a press release, for example, UN appointees “denounced” a Texas law protecting unborn children with detectable heartbeats. These UN representatives called the law “alarming,” claimed that it “violates women’s fundamental human rights,” and lamented that this year U.S. states have enacted “a historic number of highly restrictive abortion laws.” They concluded that “the United States stands in violation of international law.”

Many of the same UN mandate holders, in an unprecedented act of interference, filed a brief in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which concerns a Mississippi law protecting unborn children after 15 weeks gestation. The UN brief says that “international human rights law should guide the Supreme Court,” and claims that protections for unborn children are violations of “the United States’ obligations under the human rights treaties it has signed and ratified.”

That is absolutely false. No United Nations treaty can plausibly be interpreted to require the legality of elective abortion. No right to abortion has ever been established in international law. (In fact, the vast majority of nations provide greater legal protection for unborn children than the U.S. does.) The UN brief cites highly ideological opinions issued by UN treaty bodies and other UN groups and individuals, but such opinions are non-binding and are not the same as the agreed-upon treaties themselves. The brief even acknowledges that such opinions arose “over time” following ratification of the treaties. It is only the treaties—not the revisionist interpretations and recommendations of certain UN personnel—that were ratified and that impose obligations.

The UN's brief also appeals to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. But neither is legally binding, and neither provides support for abortion in any case. The ICPD Program of Action, for example, states: "In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning. ... Any measures or changes related to abortion within the health system can only be determined at the national or local level according to the national legislative process" (section 8.25).

The so-called "experts" from the UN are flagrantly trying to usurp this national legislative authority on the basis of false claims about international law. They have sought to do the same in many other countries as well. We will not stand for it.

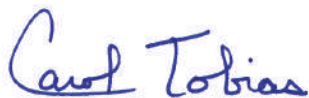
Far from supporting unlimited abortion, international human rights instruments—such as the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)—support the equal protection of human beings at all developmental stages and in all conditions. The ICCPR states, "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life" (Article 6.1). The CRC affirms that "the child ... needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth" (preamble).

Today, December 10, is Human Rights Day. On this day and every day, we remember that human rights don't depend on meeting some set of arbitrary criteria. They don't depend on our age, or our size, or our ability, or the opinions of other people. They are not exclusive to the strong and the independent. Rather, each one of us has human rights simply because we are human. This is the message of the Universal Declaration. Human rights belong to everyone.

And that's why they belong to unborn children. Human embryos and fetuses are living members of the species *Homo sapiens* at the earliest stages of their lives. They are human beings like us. This is a fact of biology. If all human beings have human rights, then unborn human beings have human rights. If everyone matters, then they matter too.

At the National Right to Life Committee and across all 50 states, our mission is to advocate for the human rights of these vulnerable members of the human family. We will not stop until they receive the respect and protection they deserve.

Sincerely,



Carol Tobias
President, National Right to Life

Please see attached sheet representing our affiliates in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.



Alabama Citizens for Life



Pro-Life Alaska



Arizona Right to Life



Arkansas Right to Life



California ProLife Council



Colorado Citizens for Life



Pro-Life Council of Connecticut



Delaware Citizens for Life



DC Metro Life Alliance



Florida Right to Life



Georgia Life Alliance



Hawaii Life Alliance



Right to Life of Idaho



Illinois Federation for Right to Life



Indiana Right to Life



Iowa Right to Life



Kansans for Life



Kentucky Right to Life



Louisiana Right to Life



Maine Right to Life



Maryland Right to Life



Massachusetts Citizens for Life



Right to Life of Michigan



Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life



Mississippi Right to Life



Missouri Right to Life



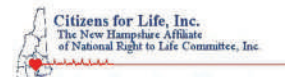
Right to Life of Montana



Nebraska Right to Life



Nevada Right to Life



Citizens for Life



New Jersey Committee for Life



Right to Life Committee of New Mexico



New York State Right to Life Committee



North Carolina Right to Life



North Dakota Right to Life



Ohio Right to Life



Oklahomans for Life



Oregon Right to Life



Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation



Rhode Island State Right to Life Committee



South Carolina Citizens for Life



South Dakota Right to Life



Tennessee Right to Life



Texas Right to Life



Right to Life of Utah



Vermont Right to Life Committee



Virginia Society for Human Life



Human Life of Washington



West Virginians for Life



Wisconsin Right to Life



Wyoming Citizens for Life