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Iowa's Crucial Role in Advancing the Pro-Life Cause

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The Family Leadership Summit held on 17 July in Des Moines was a stirring gathering of hundreds of Christians united in their mission to reshape the cultural landscape. This year's focus on the sanctity of life sparked both celebration of hard-won victories and a resolute call to address the challenges that remain in protecting the unborn.

The atmosphere was electric as speakers referenced the historic overturning of Roe v. Wade three years ago. The Dobbs decision was a triumph for human rights, wresting control from unelected judges and restoring it to the people and their elected representatives. The crowd's applause reflected decades of tireless effort, fervent prayer, and an unwavering conviction that every life is sacred.

Since Dobbs, nearly half of the United States has implemented robust protections for unborn children. In Iowa, Governor Kim Reynolds has championed a law safeguarding life once a heartbeat is detected. These measures are saving lives. Stories like that of Jacob in Florida, whose mother chose life due to a 15-week protection law, or Neesha's son in Georgia, saved by a heartbeat law and adoption, underscore the tangible impact of such legislation.

Another milestone was celebrated at the summit: a significant blow to the abortion industry. On July 4, President Donald Trump signed the reconciliation budget bill that included provisions blocking Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood for one year. This organisation, responsible for terminating 400,000 unborn lives annually, has a deplorable record. A recent investigation alleged deficiencies at some Planned Parenthood facilities. These are not anomalies but symptoms of an industry prioritising profit over care.

For years, Planned Parenthood misused public funds, not to enhance women's health but to expand abortion access, promote divisive ideologies, and target pro-life legislators. Meanwhile, its provision of genuine health services such as cervical screenings, breast exams, and cancer checks has sharply declined. The provision has led to planned closures of at least eight clinics across Iowa and Minnesota, including the only surgical abortion facility in Iowa. The Supreme Court has further bolstered this shift by upholding states' rights to redirect taxpayer money away from abortion providers, affirming the power of states and citizens to prioritise life.

Yet, the fight is far from over. Data from the Charlotte Lozier Institute indicates over 1.1 million abortions occurred between July 2023 and June 2024, among the highest annual totals in recent years. This surge is driven by the proliferation of abortion pills, mailed to women in pro-life states without in-person medical oversight, alongside a rise in "abortion tourism" to states with permissive laws. Illinois has facilities providing abortions in the second trimester, with some providers indicating viable procedures up to about 24 to 28 weeks. Such late-term procedures are controversial and position the U.S. among countries

with relatively permissive late—term abortion policies. This is a moral failing that demands urgent action.

The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees equal protection under the law for all persons. This must extend to the unborn. No one's right to life should depend on their postcode. To achieve this, bold leadership is needed at every level of government from local councils to Parliament and beyond. Iowa, as the first-in-the-nation caucus state for Republicans, holds immense influence in shaping the future of the pro-life movement. In the upcoming midterm elections and looking ahead to 2028, Iowans have a unique opportunity to steer the Republican Party and the nation toward a culture that values life. Voters must hold candidates accountable, demanding clarity, courage, and unwavering commitment to protecting the unborn.

The fall of Roe was a monumental step, but it was only the beginning. The real work lies ahead, and Iowa stands at the forefront of this defining battle.

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