



FREEDOM IS FOR
EVERYBODY

April 29, 2020

To: Interested Parties

From: NARAL Pro-Choice America

Re: How the hypocrisy of the politicians who claim to be “pro-life” is on full display during the COVID-19 pandemic

As the country and the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed [more than 50,000](#) American lives and rendered [more than 26 million](#) people unemployed in the United States, **the anti-choice movement and Republican politicians are putting their hypocrisy on full display.** Trump and other anti-choice Republicans love to claim the “pro-life” mantle, yet often place little value on people’s safety and wellbeing, a contrast made abundantly clear during the pandemic. These anti-choice actors show a blatant disregard for medical expertise and science in order to pursue their agenda of power and control at all costs. Just yesterday, anti-choice extremist **Vice President Mike Pence toured the Mayo Clinic but [refused to wear a mask](#)**, ignoring both Center for Disease Control guidelines and the hospital’s own rules and safety precautions while putting at risk healthcare workers on the front lines of the pandemic.

In states all across the country, Republican officials are illustrating this hypocrisy on a regular basis:

- Anti-choice extremist **Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick** went on Fox News to [double down](#) on his earlier comments, **and [said we should reopen the economy because “there are more important things than living.”](#)** In March, Patrick [said](#) on Tucker Carlson’s show that people over the age of 70 will just take care of themselves so younger people can get back to work in order to save the stock market.
- Reports emerged that [40 new coronavirus cases may be linked to in-person voting in Wisconsin](#) that occurred during the state’s April 7 election, in which a **Republican-controlled state Supreme Court ordered in-person voting to continue** despite a stay-at-home order being in effect and the state’s Democratic governor’s effort to reschedule the election.
- **Georgia Governor Brian Kemp allowed some businesses to reopen on April 24, [garnering pushback](#)** from those on both sides of the aisle about the risks to Georgians’ health and safety from opening prematurely. He’s also poised to [let the state’s lockdown order expire](#) on the last day of April. Kemp infamously championed Georgia’s [extreme ban on abortion](#) and signed it into law in May 2019.

- Despite **daily increases in statewide coronavirus cases** and against the advice of medical experts and state health officials, [notorious anti-choice](#) Republican **Governor Kim Reynolds of Iowa** [signed a proclamation to loosen social distancing measures](#) in a majority of lowan counties starting May 1.
- **Anti-choice Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida** [flippantly called the state, “God’s waiting room”](#) during a press conference on his COVID-19 response, a grossly inappropriate characterization considering elderly populations are [at higher risk](#) of dying from the virus. He has **allowed officials to reopen beaches** as they deem appropriate, even as the [number of new confirmed infections](#) in the state increases.
- **Missouri state legislator Mike Moon**, who has a [history](#) of extreme and violent behavior and who is known for his vehement anti-choice positions, [appears to have spoken at an anti-quarantine protest at the state capitol](#). Moon has also [said](#) that he wants police officers to stop people from accessing abortion care.
- Anti-choice **Virginia State Senator Amanda Chase** [went on a conservative talk show to minimize the loss of elderly people who succumbed to COVID-19](#), saying, “these are good people who have had good lives.” Chase calls herself “pro-life,” has supported so-called conversation therapy for LGBTQ+ people, has openly carried a gun on the Senate floor, and made headlines last year for berating a Capitol police officer.

To shine a light on the hypocrisy of the Republican party especially during the pandemic, NARAL is running an [ad campaign](#) exposing the hypocrisy of anti-choice officials who call themselves “pro-life” while jeopardizing the lives of millions of Americans amid the global health emergency. The ads specifically mention the following examples of the “pro-life” hypocrisy on full display during the pandemic:

- Attorney General William Barr trying to end healthcare coverage for millions of Americans during a national public health emergency.
- Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, who ordered his state to end its lockdown despite still being in the midst of a pandemic, ignoring warnings from public health experts and jeopardizing the lives of millions of Georgians.
- Wisconsin General Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, who forced thousands of Wisconsin citizens to vote in-person during the pandemic instead of by mail, telling them it was “incredibly safe to go out” (while wearing full protective equipment himself).
- Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, who suggested that elderly people should be willing to sacrifice their lives in order to keep businesses open and save the economy.
- Jerry Falwell Jr. reopening Liberty University against health guidelines, leading students to file a class-action lawsuit accusing Falwell of “profiteering” off of the pandemic as COVID-19 continues to spread across campus.
- 17 state Attorneys General who call themselves “pro-life” yet are suing to end the Affordable Care Act and end healthcare coverage for millions in the midst of a pandemic and record unemployment and job loss.

- Congressman Trey Hollingsworth (IN-09) who prioritized money over families' lives by publicly pushing to end social distancing, in a direct contradiction to medical guidelines.

Statement from Ilyse Hogue on NARAL's ad release calling out the "pro-life" hypocrisy:

"These times make crystal clear what we've always known: for so many of these officials, 'pro-life' is a smoke screen, not a commitment that they care to uphold. When it suits them, they're happy to endanger lives to push their agenda forward as we have seen all too well during this COVID crisis. From exploiting the pandemic to close clinics and endanger women who need abortion care to asking people to go back to work before it's safe, their actions demonstrate a distinct lack of value placed on lives."

In addition, NARAL Freedom Fund [launched a new \\$250,000 ad campaign](#) targeting Donald Trump and Mike Pence for their relentless efforts to restrict abortion access and control women, even during the pandemic. The [new ads](#) specifically call out how, even now during the pandemic—with COVID-19 testing and ventilator shortages, overwhelmed ERs, and over 26 million Americans out of work—the Trump administration continues to ignore experts in order to push their extreme agenda of banning abortion and controlling women.

NARAL is continuing to hold politicians including Donald Trump accountable and expose the hypocrisy of these politicians who claim to be "pro-life," yet are readily throwing people under the bus to further their own agenda, as they prioritize ideology over science at a time when relying on medical expertise and science could not be more paramount.