

LifeFacts



A South Dakota Right to Life Publication | Winter 2025 | www.sdRightToLife.org



Passing the Baton

By: Dale Bartscher, SDRTL Executive Director



After nearly seven years of service it is time for me to *'Pass on the Baton'*, of Executive Director, to new and capable leadership.

As we welcome the year 2025, and I look to transitioning later this spring I am reflecting on what an inspiring and rewarding experience this has been. I feel a great sense of pride in what we have accomplished together. In the past seven years, we have set in motion new areas of work and expertise in protecting the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

As I step away from my role on **Wednesday, April 1, 2025** I do so with confidence in the capable hands that will guide South Dakota Right to Life (SDRTL) into the future. Change is inevitable, and it is through embracing new perspectives and ideas that we continue to evolve and grow. I have every belief that **Jenn Lee**, our incoming Executive Director, and our amazing Board of Directors will lead with the same dedication and commitment that has defined our organization for 54 years.

Jenn lives in Sioux Falls where for eleven years, she has had her own worship and teaching ministry while raising three boys with her husband, Darren. Since September of 2023 she has served as SDRTL's Associate Director. She recently wrote,

"As my passion for protecting children and the unborn grew, I began volunteering at Pro-Life events. I became acquainted with Dale Bartscher while serving as the local chapter leader for 40 Days for Life. While serving in this position, I was continually blessed by the care and tenacity of the volunteers I met 'out on the sidewalk.' I kept returning to one thought:

All of us, as protectors of the unborn, can do a little bit more. Never underestimate the value of your 'small acts' of service. While the tumult and confusion of the world continues to spin, together, we can change the narrative concerning issues that pertain to Life.

Life is precious. I am so thankful for groups like SDRTL that devote their time, energy and resources to defending the most vulnerable among us. I look forward to serving you!"



WHAT WILL I DO NEXT? While I will no longer serve the organization in the official capacity as Executive Director, I will look forward to being an ambassador for SDRTL in my new part-time role as your **Associate Director**. I will serve our Executive Director and Board of Directors in whatever ways I am able, and I eagerly anticipate witnessing the continued impact of our work in the years to come.

Today, as I prepare to *'Pass on the Baton'* to Jenn Lee, I do so with a sense of optimism and hope. SDRTL is in a strong position, poised to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Please reach out to Jenn Lee at Jenn.SDRTL@gmail.com and introduce yourself in the next few months. She's a remarkable person who is passionate for our cause of **LIFE**. Hearing from you would go a long way to making her feel welcomed in her expanded role with SDRTL showing her how amazing our community of Pro-Life Partners really are.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for the privilege of serving alongside you. Thank you for your unwavering dedication, your passion, and your friendship. Though my time as Executive Director may be ending soon, my pride in being a part of SDRTL will always remain. This has been my life's honor.

Save the Date

HOUR OF REFLECTION

Sunday, February 2, 2025

Our **ceremonial** *'Passing of the Baton'*, from Dale Bartscher to Jenn Lee, will take place in the Capitol Rotunda during the annual *'Hour of Reflection'* at 2:00 p.m.

The **official** *'Passing of the Baton'* will take place April 1, 2025.



Grateful For Our SD Pregnancy Resource Centers

By: Anne Hanson, SDRTL President



As each of you have more than likely discovered from past experiences, those of us in the pro-life movement are often accused of disregarding the mother, or the baby, immediately after the child is born. Those in support of abortion assume that we have no care for either life and are simply just against the act of abortion. However, this could not be any farther from the truth.

The 10 pregnancy resource centers in South Dakota can attest to the fact that pro-lifers do so much in order to take care of both the mother, as well as the baby, throughout pregnancy and well into the child's life. In fact, the more than 4,000 pregnancy resources centers across the United States can show first hand that both moms and babies are taken care of; not only during pregnancy, but for their entire life.

Recently, I heard a story from a South Dakota pregnancy resource center relating to this exact topic. At first, the mother came in to the resource center unsure about what to do after finding out that she was unexpectedly pregnant. Feeling anxious about this situation, the mother met with a client advocate who continued to walk alongside both she and the baby's father throughout the entire duration of the pregnancy. Both mom and dad attended "Earn While You Learn" classes and began to feel more prepared, as well as a greater sense of peace about the situation. A few months later, the couple welcomed their baby with joy. This new family was given the support and tools they needed from a pregnancy resource center.

At South Dakota Right to Life, we are so very thankful for our pregnancy resource centers. We applaud them for the work they do and the compassion they offer to parents dealing with unexpected pregnancies. For more information on South Dakota PRCs, please visit: www.sdrighttolife.org/pregnancyhelp.

In the pro-life movement, we deeply care about every human life, at every stage of life. And at South Dakota Right to Life, we will always work to protect life from conception to natural death. Thank you, each one of you, for walking alongside us in this mission.

SDRTL's Board of Directors Adds ONE

By: Dale Bartscher, SDRTL Executive Director

The SDRTL Board of Directors met in session on Saturday, September 21, following their annual State Convention in Yankton, SD. They regretfully accepted the resignation of two faithful, passionately pro-life, long-term Board Members: **Valerie Johnson** of Mitchell, SD (National Right to Life Delegate) and **Dan Hargreaves** of Stickney, SD (Region 8 Director).

The Board then approved the two-year-term of **Carol Overweg** of New Holland, SD (Region 8 Director).

Carol and her husband, Marty, live on a farm near New Holland where they raised 5 children, one of whom was adopted. All of their children are married and reside in South Dakota and they have been blessed with 16 grandchildren. Carol works full time as an RN at the Platte Hospital. She has always held strong pro-life values and respects the sanctity of life at every stage from conception to natural death. She feels that educating more people on the positives of adoption is an important aspect of being pro-life along with holding true to God's word. *"Welcome Carol!"*



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April Dusek

South Dakota Right to Life is a non-profit, non-denominational organization whose philosophy is that all innocent human life is inviolable and is to be guaranteed protection from conception until natural death.

Hello from SDRTL's Associate Director!

By: Jenn Lee, SDRTL Associate Director



Greetings from eastern SD! I pray you all had a wonderful Christmas season with the people that you love the most. We have been busy here preparing for the 2025 Legislative session and looking ahead to what we can do in this new season to protect life at all ages and stages. What an amazing victory with the defeat of Amendment G. We are still smiling! The groundswell of support for mothers, fathers and babies came from all over South Dakota. It was especially encouraging to see the college students and youth get involved in standing for life. It was a blessing to witness their boldness and courage.

This year I had the pleasure of leading the Youth Essay Contest for SDRTL and was so touched by the passionate personal stories that so many shared. Nearly 100 students submitted essays on the topic, “Why I Am Pro Life.” It was a difficult decision, but our team of judges finally chose the top ten essays from both the Junior and Senior divisions. We would like to **CONGRATULATE** our first-place winners, Elsa Bisschop from Chancellor, SD (senior division) and Megan Ulin from Sioux Falls (junior division)! They and four other winners from each division received prizes in the mail, just in time for Christmas gift shopping! Please go to SDRighttoLife.org and click on “Essay Contest” to see our top ten winners from both divisions, and to read the winning essays. Congratulations to all our winners and we hope to see many of you enter the contest again this fall!

Senior Division:

Rank	Name	Town/School	Grade
1. \$300	Elsa Bisschop	Chancellor- Homeschooled	10th
2. \$250	Cora Kranz	Rapid City- Rapid City Christian	10th
3. \$200	Taylor Swarhout	Rapid City- Rapid City Christian	12th
4. \$150	Mary Dahlhoff	Vermillion- Vermillion High School	12th
5. \$100	Taylor Harrelson	Rapid City- Rapid City Christian	10th
6.	Allison Leber	Canistota- Canistota High School	11th
7.	Antone Kremoges	Salem- McCook Central	11th
8.	Chiara Henderson	Rapid City- Homeschooled	11th
9.	Maddie Graper	Rapid City- Rapid City Christian	12th
10.	Ethan Fischer	Rapid City- Rapid City Christian	10th

Junior Division:

Rank	Name	Town/School	Grade
1. \$300	Megan Ulin	Sioux Falls- O’Gorman	8th
2. \$250	Everly Bruening	Yankton- Sacred Heart	7th
3. \$200	Bethany Rusanowski	Dell Rapids- Homeschooled	8th
4. \$150	Addison McQueen	Sioux Falls- O’Gorman	8th
5. \$100	Mary Poeschl	Yankton- Sacred Heart	7th
6.	Mercedes Stirling	Menno- Sacred Heart	7th
7.	Jeremy Sweets	Sioux Falls- Homeschooled	7th
8.	Jessica Sweets	Sioux Falls- Homeschooled	7th
9.	Julius Sweets	Sioux Falls- Homeschooled	7th
10.	Bella Sobotka	Whitewood- Homeschooled	8th

National Right to Life

By: Dr. Fred Deutsch, NRTL Delegate



It’s my honor to serve as the new state liaison to National Right to Life. My goal and my hope is to bring a little bit of South Dakota’s pro-life perspective to the national board.

For those who don’t know me, I’ve been a long-time board member of SDRTL and am a past president of the board. My wife Kathleen and I have lived outside of Watertown for 40+ years and raised four daughters. We are both retired chiropractors. As I write this, I am serving my last term in the South Dakota legislature.

One of the abortion industry’s biggest lies that we have to overcome across the nation is that without abortion, women won’t have access to proper medical care, especially medical emergencies. That’s just a huge lie, and we need to do more to push back across the nation. In South Dakota, we’ve done a better job in keeping the focus on the unborn baby, but also helping mothers – both before and after birth. Killing an unborn baby should never be an option!

If you haven’t seen our state’s life-affirming website, please check out <https://www.sd.gov/life>. It not only provides resources to South Dakotans, but it serves as a good example to other states.

I’m proud to represent South Dakota Right to Life on the National Right to Life Board, and will attend their January 25, 2025 board meeting in Washington D.C.

As I step into this new role, I will keep you informed from a national perspective. Please pray for me that I may be a faithful representative of the values we hold dear in South Dakota and may contribute wisely to the national debate.

South Dakotans Must Fight to Stop November's Radical Abortion Measure From Passing

By: Representative Jon Hansen, Co-chair of Life Defense Fund, Vice President of South Dakota Right to Life.



“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to people of goodwill.” These are the words of the heavenly host as they praised the Lord Jesus at his birth. These were also the words that I spoke at our victory rally upon the defeat of Abortion Amendment G, praising God for this great victory, and thankful for the many more beautiful and precious lives that will be born.

For two full years, Life Defense Fund and an army of the most devoted and generous volunteers and contributors from all across South Dakota worked unwaveringly to keep our state from making the grave mistake of writing abortion into our state constitution.

In November, our efforts paid off. We defeated Abortion Amendment G by an overwhelming margin: 59% to 41%. This victory was historic. It exceeded even the wildest expectations—far bigger than any poll or analyst ever predicted.

And so, the people of the state of South Dakota have resoundingly spoken. We rejected abortion. South Dakotans chose life, love, hope, and healing over death, sorrow, pain, and regret.

Through the work of Life Defense Fund and the overwhelming number of people who volunteered and supported our efforts, **we sent a loud and clear message:** if you come to South Dakota to try to legalize the ending of innocent life via abortion—we will fight you at every single step with everything we’ve got. Nothing will be easy for you. You will struggle under immense stress and hardship. When you lie to the people of our state, we will be there to counter your lies with the truth. When you break our laws, we will sue you in court. When you campaign, we will outwork you. And in the end, the people of South Dakota, who have hearts of gold, and who have shown great love and compassion for both unborn children and their mothers, will vote to reject your radical abortion law.

Now we stand at the ready. We will not let our guard down in the defense of life. So many great people were involved in defeating Amendment G, and they are staying involved. With unbreakable commitment, we are prepared, resolute, and ready to confront any challenge that comes our way.

Sign up to join the effort and support our mission at www.lifedefensefund.com. God bless you and all of the priceless lives that we defend.



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Refer your family and friends here:
<https://sevenweekscoffee.com/?ref=sdright>

SDRTL's 2024 53rd State Convention is Memorable

By: Dale Bartscher, SDRTL Executive Director



We held our **53rd Annual State Convention**, September 20-21, in Yankton, SD. SDRTL's Newly installed Board President **Anne Hanson** of Watertown officially gaveled in the Convention. In the HOUSE were **#225 Registered Pro-Life Individuals** and a few other guests from across South Dakota! This weekend was filled with amazing speakers, refreshments, a basket row, pro-life exhibitors and of course our 'Teen Breakout Session'. Below are pictured:

- Quint Pease and Family accepting our 'Humanitarian of the Year Award' in honor and memory of Debbie Pease – SDRTL former Board President.
- Keynote Speakers: Leslee Unruh, Melissa Magstadt, Dr. Ashley Graves and Kevin Theriot
- Our Pregnancy Resource Center's Panel (SD has #10 Beautiful Centers)



~ Now is the Time to Mark Your Calendar for this Year's 54th State Convention ~

We'll see you in the Capitol City!

Save the Date:
September
26-27, 2025

~ Host Chapter ~
Pierre Area Right to Life

~ Host Location ~
Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Pierre, SD

54th Annual SDRTL Convention

We're Confirming Keynote Speakers, like Joelle! Joelle Maryn is an award-winning Actress, Speaker, and TV Host who has been featured on various TV shows including "The Journey Home" on EWTN. In her past, Joelle modeled for well-known brands such as Jergens, was on a billboard in Times Square, and co-hosted ABC's "Trend TV."



Several years ago, she had a miraculous encounter with Jesus. Joelle now shares her message of God's healing love around the world through speaking, inspirational films, and family-friendly TV Shows.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod)

is excited to host this year's Convention and are ready to roll-out the 'Red Carpet' for our participants.

Convention Registration Information and discounted Motel Accommodations may soon be found on our website at www.sdRightToLife.org. For now – 'Mark Your Calendar', please plan to attend and we'll see you September 26-27 in Pierre, SD!



Together Let's Engage the 2025 SD Legislature

By: Dale Bartscher, SDRTL Executive Director



SDRTL is recognized as the state's flagship of the pro-life movement. We work through legislation and education to protect innocent human life from abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia and related issues. Thus, we will have 'boots-on-the-ground' during the **100th** Legislative Session in Pierre, SD (January 14 – March 13, 2025).

All the pro-life victories we have seen though, and will continue to see, are because of the work of all of you, and of the great people whose shoulders we stand on. All of whom understand that life at all stages is precious and deserving of protection. Realizing the value of working together Mother Teresa said: *"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."*

- **SDRTL LOBBYISTS:** Knowing this to be true both Jenn Lee, Associate Director, and I will once again serve as registered lobbyists at the State Capitol as we work alongside our SDRTL Board Members and Representatives - Jon Hansen, Leslie Heinemann, Spencer Gosch and Al Novstrup. Together we will represent SDRTL as we support, with your help, appropriate life legislation.



- **STAYING INFORMED:** Your SDRTL Legislative Committee are considering several pieces of Pro-Life Legislation. We will be utilizing social media (Facebook, Emails, Radio Interviews, etc.) and our website at www.sdRightToLife.org to keep you informed as to happenings at the Capitol during this Legislative Session.

- **FIND MY LEGISLATORS:** If you aren't sure what district you live in, or if you'd like to find out who your current representation is, then click on our website: sdRightToLife.org, and then the 'Legislative Information' tab and follow the prompts. By adding your address and zip code you will find all the information you need!



- **CONTACTING THEM?** To leave your brief phone message of concern with your District's Legislators, you may call the Senate or House Switchboards by using the following numbers: Senate: 605-773-3821; House: 605-773-3851. To email your Senator or Representatives click on: www.sdlegislature.gov.

- **SDRTL LEGISLATIVE STUDENT INTERNS:** We are now accepting 'Statements of Interest' for the 2025 Legislative Session. To apply please Email: Dale.SDRTL@gmail.com. SDRTL Student Interns must be 9th grade through college age with high moral character and references.

"Never underestimate the ability of a small group of dedicated people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

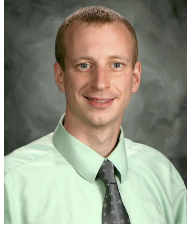


These are the 2024 SDRTL Student Interns!

To receive 'Weekly Capitol Email Updates' please go to our website at www.sdRightToLife.org and fill-in the SUBSCRIBE BOX. We would also appreciate your financial partnership. In doing so you are supporting our presence at the Capitol for the 38-Days of this coming SD Legislative Session. Thank You!

SDRTL Operates With a Flare of Financial Integrity

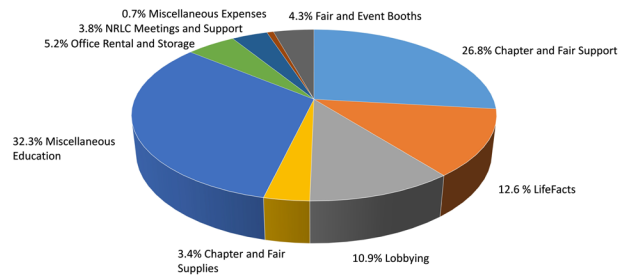
By: Spencer Cody, SDRTL Treasurer



As we approach the end of 2024 and look to a new year, let us take a look at how South Dakota Right to Life has worked to ensure that the most is made of every contribution that we have received this year and hope that you will partner or continue to partner with us as a sustaining member in 2025. So far in 2024 approximately 26.8% of your donations have gone toward providing staff in support of chapters, pro-life outreach, and coordinating exhibits and booths at fairs and other events including the convention. Lobbying for pro-life legislation each session in Pierre has taken up another 10.9% of our budget.

The LifeFacts that you receive goes to more than 16,000 households and makes up 12.6% of this year's budget. A remaining 32.3% of donations are spent on miscellaneous education outreach, which included successfully combating the extreme abortion-until-birth Amendment G. Every dollar that you donate gets fully and meaningfully utilized in the most impactful way possible. Thank you so much for supporting South Dakota Right to Life!

Where Your Donations Have Gone in 2024



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DANIEL BARTSCHER.....	DALE & JANET BARTSCHER
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52nd Annual



HOUR OF REFLECTION

FEB. 2, 2025
2 P.M. - CAPITOL ROTUNDA

Keynote Speaker
JENN LEE



EMCEE:
DALE BARTSCHER
SDRTL
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



MUSICAL GUEST:
REPRESENTATIVE
JON HANSEN

Walk for Life 12 - 1 p.m.
Led by the Woods Family
State Capitol Grounds - Pierre
Grand Marshalls:
SD Pregnancy Resource Centers

