

# Violence Against Pregnant Women

**Item: 19-03:** On Making a Statement Regarding Violence Against Pregnant Women.

**GA Committee Assignment:** 19- Health Issues

## **Summary of the business and what it wants the Assembly to do:**

The Boise Presbytery is asking the 219<sup>th</sup> GA to:

- Condemn assaults and acts of force, coercion, and violence against pregnant females;
- Acknowledge the physical, mental and spiritual damage that results from such violence to women and their unborn children;
- Affirm that pregnant females are precious to God, and that the church is called to care, compassion, and justice on behalf of pregnant females;
- Encourage churches to provide shelter, medical care and counseling for pregnant females experiencing violence & coercion;
- Identify violations against females, children, and creative acts of God,
- And to include such assaults in human rights reports to the GA;
- Instruct the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly to communicate this overture to state and federal legislatures and urge adoption of legislation to protect pregnant females from acts of force, coercion, and violence.

## **Background:**

The original overture coming to Boise Presbytery specifically included “coercion upon a pregnant female *to obtain an abortion.*” Boise amended to strike “to obtain an abortion” and removed statistical data from the rationale showing that 64% of females who have abortions feel pressured by others to abort as well as data showing the negative effects of abortion on women.

## **Analysis of the business and how it would affect the Church:**

If approved this overture would raise awareness of the incidence of violence, coercion, and force against pregnant women and the harm such violence does to women and their unborn babies. Entities of the PC(USA) holding advisory and advocacy roles would be charged by this action to include violence and coercion toward pregnant women as one of the issues they address socially, ecumenically, and legislatively on behalf of the PC(USA). Acts of force, violence, and coercion toward pregnant women would become one of the human rights issues that are reported by ACSWP to each GA. The Stated Clerk would be charged with communicating this GA action to state and federal legislators and urging the adoption of legislation to protect pregnant females from coercion and violence.

**Possible negative effect:** Might be used by those who oppose pro-life activities, such as prayer and sidewalk counseling outside abortion facilities, to label such activity as “coercive” and to advocate for legislative restrictions against such activity.

## **Pertinent Resources:**

The rationale contains real life stories and statistical citations that are helpful.

“Forced Abortion in America” by the Elliott Institute available at: <http://afterabortion.org>

## **Action by GA that will help the Church:**

*Approve*

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**An Advisory on Business to the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010)**

*From the Joint Renewal GA Team*