

**PETITION TO THE 2016 ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**TITLE: MEMBERSHIP IN THE COLORADO RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

**ACTION TO BE VOTED ON:**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the people of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference, affirm our membership in the Colorado Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

**PETITION DETAILS:**

This petition is  
 - A Legislative Petition (Binding on the Annual Conference)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

TERMINATION DATE: Not applicable

Does the petition modify the Annual Conference Standing Rules and Operational Procedure?

- No

**ORIGINATOR OF THE PETITION (individual, church, or organization):**

Name: The Reverend Margaret Rush Hankins  
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**PERSON TO PRESENT PETITION AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE:**

Name: The Reverend Margaret Rush Hankins  
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Greenwood Village, CO 80121  
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**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Will this have any identifiable financial impact to the conference?  
 - NO

**RATIONALE (Not Debatable):**

In the late 1970's, an interfaith organization now known as The Colorado Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (CORCRC) was formed in Colorado with active participation from members of the Rocky Mountain Conference of The United Methodist Church. In 1978, The Rocky Mountain Annual Conference voted to support the Religious Coalition.

CORCRC is an affiliate of the national Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) founded in 1973 with The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society and The United Methodist Women as founding members. United Methodist membership continued on the general church level until the May 2016, General Conference voted to withdraw general agencies from RCRC. Nothing in the legislation prohibits membership of Annual Conferences of their agencies. Nothing in the legislation prohibits membership of Annual Conferences or their agencies.

CORCRC is a community of religious organizations of faithful individuals dedicated to reproductive justice through education, organization and advocacy. The coalition, currently chaired by a United Methodist pastor, provides speakers and resources, offers non-judgmental counseling to persons dealing with reproductive issues, and empowers people of faith to think about, discuss and work for policies that promote justice, equality and religious liberty.

Although theologically diverse, RCRC members are united in their belief in religious liberty and the God-given ability of women to live as faithful, responsible, moral agents.

The purposes and actions of RCRC are consistent with our United Methodist statement on Responsible Parenthood (161.1) in The Social Principles. With CORCRC, we believe in a loving God who is very much present in times of pain, loss and difficult decisions.

A “YES” vote for the petition before you affirms support of a faith-based coalition established four decades ago for the purpose of being present as a voice of compassion and justice in the world.

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child.

We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection or eugenics (see Resolution 3184).

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. This procedure shall be performed only by certified medical providers. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion. We entrust God to provide guidance, wisdom, and discernment to those facing an unintended pregnancy.

The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

We mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates. The Church shall encourage ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education, advocacy in regard to contraception, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe.

Young adult women disproportionately face situations in which they feel that they have no choice due to financial, educational, relational, or other circumstances beyond their control. The Church and its local congregations and campus ministries should be in the forefront of supporting existing ministries and developing new ministries that help such women in their communities. They should also support those crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancy. We

particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. (See ¶ 161L.) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel.

#### Ministry to Those Who Have Experienced an Abortion

We urge local pastors to become informed about the symptoms and behaviors associated with post-abortion stress. We further encourage local churches to make available contact information for counseling agencies that offer programs to address post-abortion stress for all seeking help.