



ARTL Personhood Campaign Guidelines

Lessons Learned from the 2008 Colorado Campaign that Launched Today's Personhood Movement

The leaders of American Right To Life were involved with Colorado's 2008 Personhood campaign from beginning to end. In the hope of hastening future victories, we are sharing some of the lessons learned with those across the U.S. fighting for the recognition of Personhood. And we've attached helpful documents including an example *Campaign [Statement of Values](#)*¹ and *Personhood [Talking Points](#)*!²

Colorado's campaign was historic. 2008 marked the first time since the states began condoning child killing (19 states allowed abortion before *Roe vs. Wade*) that a general election gave voters the opportunity to *acknowledge* the right to life of the unborn. (Notice, we cannot *establish* personhood, for the Creator did that; we are moving the government to *recognize* personhood.) In 1967, Colorado's Republican Governor John Love "legalized" the killing of children conceived by acts of rape or incest, or if the pregnancy threatened the life of, or presented severe health complications to, the mother. Now, the 2008 work of American RTL and others has inspired dozens of Personhood efforts across America! Consider these crucial points for conveying the personhood message.

The DOs & DON'Ts

Don't Pretend: Don't ever pretend that the goal is anything but ending abortion: We are not going to fool the nation into outlawing child killing and we shouldn't try to. A disingenuous liberal advocating wickedness will get a pass from the media and the public, but those same people will distrust and condemn an evasive person who is trying to do right. Besides, tricking someone doesn't turn their heart away from sin which, as Christians, should be one of our goals.

Don't Defend: Don't defend those who oppose Personhood. The goal is to protect every child by love and by law. What of those who disagree? You can expose their error, ignorance, or wickedness, but please don't defend those who oppose the effort to enforce, by law, the God-given right to life of every innocent person.

Don't Excuse: Don't make excuses for Planned Parenthood murdering countless children by saying, "Now that we have 4D ultrasound, we know that this is a baby." Long before ultrasound, the mutilated body of the first aborted child, and the millions since, testified to the wickedness of child killing. 3,500 years ago the Mosaic Law in the Hebrew Scriptures recognized the unborn child as a person (AmericanRTL.org/[Bible](#)). 2,400 years ago the father of medicine wrote in the [Hippocratic Oath](#), "never do harm" and "[I will not... cause an abortion](#)." From the beginning moms have talked about the "baby" in their womb. Today, 3D and [4D ultrasound](#) shows for all to see what has always been known, the precious humanity of the child in the womb.

Don't Confuse: Don't confuse the public with claims that we're really trying to recognize the "fetus" as a person in court after that baby is killed by a drunk driver or some other crime (as with Conner's Law). Yes we can demonstrate the insanity that abortion laws have caused with such examples, but never imply that this is what motivates us. Abortion is evil and undermines the value of human life in many areas, but our goal is not to chip away at each of these in order to eventually end abortion. Our goal is to end abortion now and terminate the myth that a fetus is not really a baby.

Don't Attach: Don't connect the issue to a political party. Partisan politics will undermine your effort as most parties thrive on compromise. Because it is a matter of innocent life, Personhood and compromise are flatly incompatible. Also, political parties possess baggage on many issues of great disagreement. Don't let those differences pull votes away from Personhood.

Don't Detach: Focus on the innocent children who will die if we don't end abortion. Reporters, politicians, talk show hosts, and even some "conservative activists" will try to obfuscate and steer the conversation to lesser issues. Don't let them! Abortionists murder several innocent babies every minute, mandating that we give ending abortion its rightful place as our top priority. Keep the focus on the child.

Don't Veer: Don't venture into wild guesses about the Supreme Court. Don't pretend to know that if your campaign is successful, the courts will do the right thing. The failed approach for a third-of-a-century to get the U.S. Supreme Court to right its own wrong and reverse *Roe v. Wade* is not surprising since the Justices have referred to their 150-year old pro-slavery Dred Scott decision [56 times](#) without the court ever recognizing that opinion's illegitimacy and crime against millions of innocent persons. Because the Court refuses to see their pro-abortion rulings as illegitimate, some think that it's "the wrong time" to fight to end child killing. But after denying the full personhood rights of black slaves, and after a war, a Constitutional Amendment, and abolition, the Supreme Court *still* has not acknowledged its crime against humanity and the millions of slaves who further suffered with Dred Scott. Abolitionist hero William Wilberforce would *never* have opposed those fighting for abolition and he urged Americans to fight to abolish, rather than regulate, slavery. It's never the wrong time to do the right thing. The Supreme Court was wrong in Dred Scott as is every court today that rules that a child, at any stage of biological development, is not a person. We are not trying to change the culture to end abortion. Rather, on the way to ending abortion, we will change the culture. With or without any court, party, or official, but with God's help, we will stop the medical industry from killing children.

Don't Fear: Don't be afraid of the truth and don't shy away from the so-called "hard cases." Instead, directly address the immorality of killing a child because his father is a criminal³ (a rapist). And there is never a medical emergency that could justify a physician who stops caring for a pregnant mom just long enough to kill her child. If, during delivery, the mother's life is really in danger, the medical protocol is to deliver the baby by Caesarean section and make every reasonable effort to save both. Genuine medical practice never dictates that anyone harm, much less intentionally kill, a child. Consider [Sherri's Story](#)⁴ and [Victims and Victors](#) by co-authors including Julie Makimaa! Please join us in committing to memory these lessons from Sherri and Julie on the so-called 'hard cases,' *so called* because it is never hard oppose the intentional killing of a child.

Do Build Your Base Within The Church: Build your support within the Church. The power of God's promises and the loving support of His people will work toward your advantage! If a pro-lifer disapproves of your efforts, rather than be discouraged realize that one day you will say to him, "Welcome aboard!" Frame Personhood as the spiritual battle that it is. The secular world and their false gods have no reason to protect the unborn. This is our battle (John [10:10](#))!

Do Adopt Uncompromised Principles: Make sure the campaign has published principles by which it operates. Consider adopting a published Statement of Values from a principled organization. See Colorado RTL's [Campaign Statement of Values](#) which they adapted from the [AmericanRTL Principles](#) items 1, 2, and 4, which work especially well for a personhood campaign. If your effort is run out of an existing pro-life organization, make sure it has valid and publicly available principles.

Do Structure the Campaign Well: Form a campaign committee with principled people. (Even if an existing organization is running the campaign, always press one another to adhere to godly principles.) Try to get help from those who have successfully run uncompromising campaigns. A well managed campaign has the best opportunity to present the clear, consistent message you will need to succeed. (Regarding writing style, consider using ARTL's [Style Guide for Right To Life Writings](#).) Clearly identify multiple spokesmen. If you misspeak or are misquoted, always ask the media for a correction. Take the necessary time to train your spokesmen and remember that this is an intellectual, as well as spiritual, battle, so drill your spokesmen and women.

Do Have an Advisory Board: invite principled and committed leaders to function as an advisory board whose mission is to see that you uphold your statement of values. If you need help finding qualified people contact ARTL or find names of possible invitees on the list of leaders beginning with Alan Keyes that appears in [ARTL's PBA Summary](#) or from among the First Tier of pro-life leaders at [ProlifeProfiles.com](#). Empower your advisors to hold the campaign accountable to godly principles. If they cannot correct a serious defect in the campaign, a public resignation by the advisory board would expose the defect and could help keep the larger movement on track by reinforcing that the principles of personhood cannot be compromised.

Do Transparent Accounting: millions of dollars are being raised by the modern Personhood movement. Not everyone can operate by ARTL's practices, but consider the [salary and benefits standards](#) of American RTL. Employ financial practices that honor God and are above reproach. (If you're doing a ballot-access signature drive, you can try out the [ARTL Signature Drive Calculator](#) to help you with the otherwise difficult task of estimating your weekly progress. Financial accounting, unlike interim signature counts, should be transparent. But if you occasionally announce the number of signatures your drive has collected, your volunteers can easily become either discouraged or too complacent. So the campaign organization may want to keep private the number of signatures collected along the way. Cal Zastrow, co-founder of Personhood USA, is the nation's foremost expert and greatest cheerleader on how to conduct a successful personhood petition drive, and with his co-founder Keith Mason, led the successful drive to get Colorado's historic personhood amendment on the ballot!)

Do Archive the Campaign: The campaign should appoint a reliable volunteer as the official archivist. Don't rely on a group of people to do this, since not only will they duplicate each other's work and waste valuable time, but if no one person is ultimately responsible for archiving, it is likely that important materials will not be archived. And it might be too time consuming for someone to gather everyone's privately saved records and compile a single archive. How do you archive a campaign? See the ARTL [Campaign Archivist](#) document for ideas that include suggestions on useful software and archiving techniques.

Do Use Principled Language: three decades ago the medical and legal communities with the intent of dehumanizing the youngest children redefined the term *fertilization* to mean *implantation* so that they could lie to women and refer to chemical abortifacients as *contraceptives*. Virtually the entire Personhood movement has now learned from the mistake of Colorado's 2008 Personhood Amendment which defined the term person as "from fertilization." Virtually all of the subsequent Personhood efforts in thirty states have adopted language that would protect a child from the beginning of the biological development of that child. So make sure to **adopt language that wisely protects all unborn children regardless of the method of**

reproduction, whether sexually or asexually. A naturally occurring genetically-identical twin does not come into existence through fertilization (sexual reproduction), and neither does a child who is created by being "peeled off" so to speak, as one or two cells from another boy or girl who had only grown to the size of a few cells in a fertility lab. Professor and bioethicist at Georgetown University Dr. Dianne N. Irving⁵ teaches, "one can claim that *all* human beings begin to exist at 'fertilization' or at 'conception'. But by definition, that makes all human beings reproduced asexually disappear (which would include one of every set of naturally occurring human monozygotic twins *in vivo*, and all human embryo reproduced asexually using the various cloning techniques, genetic engineering, etc.)."⁶

Do Be Humble: The goal is to protect a baby who can't protect herself. In the Colorado campaign we all received a rebuke⁷ from the nation's leading expert on personhood language, Dr. Irving. And she was right. Colorado Right To Life publicly apologized⁸ and thanked Dr. Irving for her correction and for thereby encouraging⁹ and strengthening the wider personhood movement!

Do Talk About God: some national organizations have misled activists for decades telling them to avoid any mention of God because, "We can win this based on science." But none of the laws of science even mention right and wrong. Twentieth century Germany was in the vanguard of Europe's academic and scientific progress and rejected Judeo-Christian principles and then slaughtered millions—while not a single law of science was able to condemn them. **We are endowed from our Creator with the right to life.** Abortion is wrong because it's a baby; it's always wrong to kill a baby.

Summary

Be prepared to answer questions from the media, supporters and detractors! Consider arguments from the [Personhood Campaign Talking Points](#)! Consider coordinating with ARTL and [PersonhoodUSA.com](#) (and possibly taking advantage of the online support for your campaign that PersonhoodUSA has available) so that leaders across the country will be more informed and encouraged by your efforts! Brush up on your biology of early human life by benefiting from a lifetime of research by Dr. Irving through her fabulous writings (to begin, see the footnotes below). American RTL is here to support your efforts. Consider inviting ARTL's spokespeople to your event to educate, motivate, and support your Personhood efforts.

May God richly bless you through Jesus Christ as you seek to honor Him above all else, and to protect innocent children who are made in His image and likeness. Abortion is always wrong because it's a baby; it's always wrong to kill a baby.

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(Get a [pdf download](#) of these guidelines, which appear online at AmericanRTL.org/campaign-guidelines.)

¹ See Colorado RTL's Campaign [Statement of Values](#)

² See ARTL's [Maryland Personhood Campaign Talking Points](#) and [CRTL's Personhood Campaign Talking Points 2010](#)

³ Deuteronomy [24:16](#)

⁴ ARTL's So-Called Hard Cases: [Sherri's Story](#)

5 Lifeissues.net "[Me and Mengele](#)"

6 Dr. Dianne Irving, "[Safeguarding human life 'from the very beginning'](#)" (search for: conception), "[Human Asexual Reproduction](#)," and "[Neither, Nor](#)" on Wilke, Byrne, conception and fertilization

7 Dr. Dianne [Irving rebukes the 2008 Colorado Personhood campaign](#)

8 Colorado RTL Replies to Dr. Irving: [Faithful are the Wounds of a Friend](#).

9 American Life League's president [Judie Brown's reaction](#) to CRTL's apology, and see [Dr. Irving's own response](#): "It is quite refreshing to see such intellectual and moral honesty..."