



## Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

### ***“Born Alive” Action Day: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parishes***

#### **Introduction**

##### **Why should our parish participate in civic engagement?**

When the faithful participate in grassroots advocacy by contacting their elected officials to urge them to support laws that protect life, we answer the Church’s call to faithful and responsible citizenship. What is more, we actively defend vulnerable life and our cherished liberties. It is important to remember that the Church is not a political party and that we do not work for or against particular candidates. Rather, we advocate for public policies that seek the common good and build the culture of life.

##### **Why is our parish’s action needed on the Born Alive Abortion Survivor’s Protection Act?**

Sometimes babies are born alive during an attempted abortion. Some are then left alone to die, or even killed. We need stronger laws to protect these babies from infanticide. But a bill to provide stronger protections—the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act—is being blocked in the U.S. House of Representatives. 199 Representatives have signed a discharge petition to force a vote on the bill, but 19 more Representatives must sign the petition to force a vote. 45 U.S. Representatives have been identified as potentially persuadable to support the petition if enough of their constituents urge them to sign it. **One or more of those Members is in OUR diocese/state, and they need to hear from us and their other constituents.**

##### **What is a “Born Alive” Action Day?**

During a “Born Alive” action day, volunteers provide information about the Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act and help parishioners contact their U.S. Representative. Volunteers can be stationed at the church exits after Mass with a smart phone or internet-capable iPad for those who would like to send their message immediately. For those who prefer to send their message later, volunteers can pass out flyers or slips of paper with the information needed to do so.

#### **Sample Action Plan for a “Born Alive” Action Day**

##### **1. Secure permission from your pastor.**

Arrange a meeting with your pastor. You may need to do this right now, in advance, in order to get Born Alive Action Day on the parish calendar. It is important to respect the pastor’s time, so be prepared in advance of the meeting and bring a couple copies of the fact sheet with you. Be sure to express your appreciation for the meeting at its conclusion. Also, be sensitive to your pastor’s concerns about legislative action by the Church. Be ready to explain that the e-mails are directed only toward influencing legislation and not toward electing or defeating any candidate. While the Church cannot and does not oppose or support candidates for elective office, we can and are called to be involved in advocacy on legislation.

Discuss the importance of the Born Alive bill with your pastor. Explain clearly what you are asking the pastor to help you accomplish. The introduction section above can help you put the request in context. Then seek permission to do the following:

- Conduct a “Born Alive” Action Day event, which may include a pulpit announcement the weekend of the event.
- Place bulletin announcements before and after the event.
- Place information in the narthex and at exits of the church.
- Put a link on the parish website to [www.babiesbornalive.com](http://www.babiesbornalive.com).

## **2. Create a team to take action**

The best and easiest way to conduct this take action drive is to do it electronically. This can be done after all Masses or during a parish event such as a Memorial Day event or ministry fair. All you need is a team of volunteers equipped with smart phones and/or internet-capable tablets to be present at the information tables and exits. Parishioners can use the volunteers’ or their own devices to visit the USCCB action center at [www.bit.ly/born-alive](http://www.bit.ly/born-alive) OR to text **ALIVE** to 50457. (Standard message and data rates apply.)

Network with key people to create a team to help you. This activity is especially good for involving youth! Contact parish groups such as the youth group, young adult group, pro-life group, and other committees within the parish that might be willing to help with the take-action project. Be sure to advise the ushers of your activities and integrate their services into the effort as much as possible.

## **3. Prepare for the Masses on “Born Alive” Action Day.**

It is very important to include a pulpit announcement at every Mass on Born Alive Action Day. If possible, the parish pro-life coordinator, or a designate, should carry out this task. Please adapt the wording of the announcement to fit the arrangements in your parish.

Station multiple volunteers at exits and in the narthex with internet-connected smart phones, iPads, tablets, etc. to help those who don’t have their own devices send a message via [www.bit.ly/born-alive](http://www.bit.ly/born-alive). (Be sure to do a practice run with all the volunteers so they know how the website works and can help people input the information needed to send their message to Congress.) There could also be volunteers at every station handing out the take-away information for those who would prefer to send a message later. The [take-away slips](#) could also be put in a basket for those who would prefer to take one from there instead of from a volunteer.

Set up a table with additional information and make it as attractive and visible as possible (for example, with banners or flowers). Be sure to also have informational flyers available at the exits.

## **4. Thank the people who helped you!**

It is important to thank volunteers AND the priest who assisted in this effort. Thank you for taking the lead on this important action drive!

## ***Sample Pulpit Announcements***

**Option 1:** Volunteers at the exits can help you tell Congress to protect babies born alive during abortion. You can send your message on your way out or take information, so you can send it later.

**Option 2:** Please take a slip from the baskets at the exits today. They tell you how to send a quick message to Congress to end infanticide.

**Option 3:** Please take the information being passed out at the exits. It tells you how to quickly tell our Congressman we need stronger laws to protect babies who survive abortion and are born alive.