

February 22, 2004 Newsletter
Massachusetts - Choose Life, Inc.

Choose Life was conceived in Florida in an effort to provide support to pregnant women in crisis through a specialty license plate which raised money to fund adoption. The popularity of the plate has resulted in mirrored efforts to make it available in states across the country. In some cases, the plate has been met with criticism for portraying a "pro-life" message. Our message is pro-adoption which can be nothing other than pro-life. Pro-choice advocates that are truly choice minded are supportive since life and adoption are also choices. This newsletter details the efforts of Massachusetts Choose Life, Inc. to date.

On July 12, 2003, I contacted Russell Amerling, one of the officers of Choose Life, Inc. in Florida. I was interested in obtaining a Choose Life plate and after finding out it was unavailable in Massachusetts, inquired as to how I could help make it available. After some discussion, Russ agreed to help me start a Choose Life effort here in Massachusetts. Each state works on the Choose Life effort through its own corporation but Russ Amerling, from Choose Life Florida, is a resource and available to help throughout the process. It is his goal to see Choose Life succeed in all fifty states.

Russ also explained to me that states can raise money to offset costs associated with day to day business through special Choose Life products. Florida's web site, www.choose-life.org, sells products which promote the choose life effort such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps and license plate frames. State groups can also use these products to raise funds to support their efforts.

The laws governing specialty plates differ from state to state. My first step would be to determine the requirements for specialty plates. Not knowing where to start, I wrote to my state legislators and the governor. I also contacted the registry and began calling pro-life organizations for support.

On July 28, 2003 I emailed Senator Marion Walsh of the Massachusetts state senate requesting support for Choose Life.

On August 31, 2003 I emailed the Massachusetts Citizens for Life letting them know what I was doing and requesting their support.

On September 8, 2003 I received a response from my local senator, Richard Tisei. He explained that filing of a bill would be necessary to create the plate, as well as a \$100,000 bond, 1,500 applicants for the plate and the \$40 applicant fee for each plate. He suggested contacting potentially supportive organizations.

On September 17, 2003 our web site www.machoose-life.org came online through the efforts of Choose Life, Inc. and Thorpe Mayes. Choose Life, Inc. purchased and gave to us the above unique domain address and Thorpe designed a Choose Life web site that can be edited and used by each state. As the states begin the Choose Life effort, Thorpe provides a free basic web site setup including an online petition and newsletter distribution.

On October 10, 2003 I received a call from the Deputy Registrar, Steve Sebastian. He was calling me in response to my letter to the governor. Currently, specialty plates can only benefit one of the approximately two dozen charitable organizations detailed in section 2F of Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws. New plates need to either partner with one of these organizations or support one of the causes set forth in the law. Neither adoption nor pregnant women in crisis were listed as supported causes. In order to create the Choose Life license plate, I would need to seek an amendment to add language to incorporate the adoption

cause. He suggested I approach a local representative or senator to sponsor a bill to amend the General Law to focus on the desired recipient(s) of Choose Life funding.

On October 12, 2003, I attended the Walk for Life in Boston to notify potential supporters of the Choose Life effort.

On October 17, 2003, Choose Life, Inc. was organized and incorporated through the state of Massachusetts for the purpose of promoting a specialty plate to raise funds for distribution to agencies that will use such funds to promote the adoption of children.

On December 30, 2003, Choose Life, Inc. applied for tax exempt status. Since that time, the IRS has acknowledged receipt of our request. They estimate an answer in approximate 4 months.

On January 29, 2004, Choose Life, Inc. held its first official meeting with Russ Amerling and his wife, Jill, present to explain the steps necessary to promote the Choose Life effort in our state. The meeting proved a positive arena for questions, answers and exchanging ideas on how to best promote Choose Life. Earlier that day, I had spoken to Senator Richard Tisei. He told me that if we met the requirements of the bond, number of applicants and application fee, the amendment should go through and he would support it. He said it was not so much a matter of pro-life vs. pro-choice as it was fairness. He further stated the legislation was recently passed to create several distinctive plates for various organizations including the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Fund, the Power Linemen to further the training of apprentices, the public school PTO/PTA Public School Education Fund and the Harvey Ball World Smile Foundation to fund arts, culture and education.

On February 4, 2004, letters were sent to Archbishop Sean O'Malley of the Archdiocese of Boston, Project Rachel, and the Family Life Institute introducing the Choose Life effort and asking for support. The support of the Archdiocese would include permission to publish information regarding Choose Life in Boston's Catholic newspaper, The Pilot.

Here is the current status of Massachusetts Choose Life, Inc.

We are waiting for our non-profit status from the IRS. Once we receive non-profit status, we can accept donations to promote the effort and application fees in anticipation of issuing the Choose Life plate.

We are gathering email addresses and/or mailing address information of anyone interested in receiving news about Choose Life. Email addresses will be added to the newsletter mailing list to receive the most up to date information regarding Choose Life. Those without email can receive information through postal mailings. The address information will be protected and not given or sold to other groups and will only be used to promote the Choose Life efforts.

We are looking for avenues to promote Choose Life. As you can see, we have sent letters and emails requesting support. Please tell others about www.machoose-life.org where they can sign our on-line petition supporting legislature to create the license plate, request they be added to the waiting list for the plate and sign up for our informative newsletter. Help us spread the word about this great effort for Massachusetts. Any suggestions or help in this area are most appreciated.