

# How a San Diego doctor led the antiabortion movement to embrace controversial pill 'reversal'

July 1 2024, by Mackenzie Mays, Los Angeles Times

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Two months before the U.S. Supreme Court shot down an attempt to ban abortion medication, a San Diego County doctor who was a plaintiff in

the case stepped onto a stage in Texas and warned that another civil war is coming—this time over an issue "deeper than" slavery.

"This is life versus death, much more fundamental to our existence and to our relationship with our creator than being free or being a slave," Dr. George Delgado said in April at an event hosted by the antiabortion group Life First. "This has a true potential to divide our country in a civil war. ... The pro-life states must remain vigilant."

In a Supreme Court ruling this month, all nine justices declared that plaintiffs including Delgado, who has practiced medicine in California for more than 30 years, lacked standing and could not seek to pull abortion pills off the market simply because they are morally opposed.

The court unanimously voted to uphold access to abortion pills in the high-stakes case, ruling that the plaintiffs had made "too speculative" of a reach in their attempt to limit distribution of the medication.

But those criticisms have never stopped Delgado, who, against the backdrop of liberal California's mission to serve as a reproductive rights haven, has built an antiabortion empire based on what leading medical researchers have deemed unproven and potentially dangerous.

Delgado, a doctor who is certified in [family medicine](#) and [palliative care](#) but not in obstetrics and gynecology, is credited as the founder of so-called abortion pill reversal—a controversial protocol that is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration and has been condemned by major medical organizations but has become a key tool in the national antiabortion movement.

The "reversal" process involves administering shots of progesterone to women who have taken the first of a two-pill regimen to induce an abortion. It is offered at Culture of Life Family Services, a state-licensed

community clinic in Southern California that boasts "Christ-centered medical care" and where Delgado serves as medical director.

Inside the Escondido clinic, located in a strip mall steps away from a Planned Parenthood, a crucified Jesus hangs on one wall and a lace rendering of the Last Supper hangs on another. Nearby stands a large statue of Mother Teresa holding a child.

Delgado declined to speak with a Times reporter who visited the clinic last week. He has not responded to numerous emails and phone messages seeking comment over the last two months.

As a regular guest on Catholic radio shows, conservative podcasts and at antiabortion events, Delgado, a 61-year-old soft-spoken man from San Marcos, talks openly about how his Catholicism influences his work as a doctor, often citing Pope John Paul II and Vatican documents.

The state-licensed doctor has voiced [ethical concerns](#) over in vitro fertilization on behalf of "the pre-born" and said embryos have "a right" to be gestated by only their biological mother. He has gone further than antiabortion Republicans who have pushed "fetal personhood" arguments—suggesting on a Catholic radio show last year that frozen embryos stored in labs be baptized, a move he acknowledged would melt and destroy them but at least they'd have a "course to salvation."

Since he published a controversial study about his abortion reversal method in 2018, Republicans in more than a dozen states including Arkansas and Kentucky have moved to pass laws requiring that abortion providers inform patients about it. Meanwhile, Democratic-controlled states such as California face an uphill battle in their attempts to limit Delgado's influence, with past court rulings favoring Christian pregnancy centers that promote his reversal method in the name of religious freedom.

The Supreme Court's decision earlier this month is unlikely to deter him—and abortion-rights advocates are worried more suits will follow. Since the undoing of federal abortion rights in 2022, Delgado has been on the road, urging conservatives to become more involved in the issue and evangelizing about [abortion](#) pill reversal, even as one study of it was halted over safety concerns.

Instead of leaving California for a friendlier political landscape, Delgado has deemed his home state "mission territory." During his keynote speech at an antiabortion event in Corona del Mar last year, the doctor paced the stage and gripped a microphone, pleading with attendees to spread the word about his work, warning it is threatened by an ongoing lawsuit by California's attorney general.

"The battle is on," he said at the Port Theater to applause. "Goliath is attacking us right here in our own backyard. So we need to step up and fight them every single step of the way."

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Citation: How a San Diego doctor led the antiabortion movement to embrace controversial pill 'reversal' (2024, July 1) retrieved 1 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-07-san-diego-doctor-antiabortion-movement.html>

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