

My friends,

In the last few days I have received and read quite a bit of information from many of you on the petition circulating to make Lubbock a "sanctuary city for the unborn". I know that this is an important issue for everyone and needs to be addressed. I apologize for not addressing it sooner but at the same time, there have been so many prayer requests from the deacon community and I've also had my hands full at the moment with what Martha is going through that's it's taken up a lot of my time. I ask that you continue to pray for all and for a quick and complete recovery for everyone affected.

Just so everyone is on the same page and everyone is clear, I would like to share with you the official position being taken by Bishop Coerver and the Diocese of Lubbock regarding this petition circulating among residents of Lubbock. As you will read, this is actually a more complex and "charged" matter than simply a "prolife" effort aimed at preventing Planned Parenthood from returning to Lubbock. Bishop Coerver is not promoting the petition/ordinance for the reasons explained below; *he does not, however, oppose the proposed ordinance and respects the right of individual citizens to discern whether or not to sign the petition.* Bishop Coerver is not comfortable signing the petition himself, and he asks that those who discern they are comfortable signing the petition to do so *as individual citizens without any reference to representing the Diocese of Lubbock or the Catholic Church.*

From Bishop Coerver:

I do not agree with the strategy as it is being put forward and will not sign the petition. Here is my "official" explanation of why:

The petition is being spearheaded by State Senator Charles Perry and some of his political allies. Unfortunately, politics is very much behind this effort. I have consulted with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops (TCCB) from which I learned about its political entanglements. While Senator Perry has been a good partner with TCCB on some aspects of our legislative agenda, this is not an effort we choose to partner with him on. Working closely with Senator Perry is Texas Right to Life and the website "Lifesite" – those are organizations which the TCCB has explicitly decided not to be in partnership with. I have told Senator Perry's office that the Diocese of Lubbock would not oppose the ordinance but we would not promote it. You might ask, "Why?"

The prolife groups which TCCB partners with have basically recommended that the movement to establish "Sanctuary Cities for the Unborn" should not be supported. They find it to be legally untenable which will not withstand a court challenge, and therefore stands to waste a lot of taxpayer dollars, organizing energy, and time that could be spent on more sustainable prolife efforts. Furthermore, even the title "Sanctuary City" seems to be a dig at the Sanctuary City efforts to protect immigrants, which the proponents of the current effort are opposed to. Finally, some of the public behavior of those proposing the ordinance in bringing it forward is not of the sort that I want our Catholic prolife efforts to be associated with.

At this time prior to the General Election on November 3, we need to be very circumspect and politically astute that the Church not be seen to be engaging in partisan politics or supporting specific candidates. I believe supporting this ordinance would do just that. On August 12 I published a statement regarding Planned Parenthood's plans to come to Lubbock. In that statement I set forth the approach to prolife matters that as Bishop of Lubbock I want to see us take. I even encourage those who would be so inclined to actively engage as individuals in efforts that directly prevent Planned Parenthood from coming to Lubbock; but this ordinance is too laced with political agendas. My statement is available on the diocesan website, and in a couple of weeks I will be encouraging the Faithful of the Diocese to take a look at the statement as well as the document of the USCCB intended to be the only "Catholic Voting Guide" which can properly use the name "Catholic" – *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.*

Blessings,

**Deacon Juan Cavazos**

Vicar for Deacons

Director Marriage & Family Life

P.O. Box 98700

Lubbock, Texas 79499-8700

806-792-3943 Ext. 221

[jcavazos@catholiclubbock.org](mailto:jcavazos@catholiclubbock.org)