



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of the Archbishop

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Dear Brothers in Holy Orders,

Today we are exactly five weeks from election day, Tuesday, November 7.

Some members of the faithful have written me that their pastor has declined to actively oppose Issue 1, including not playing my Respect Life Sunday homily, stating, “Everyone already knows where the Catholic Church stands on abortion.” While that may or may not be the case, it misses the point entirely. **Issue 1 is not primarily about the legality of abortion.** Abortion is legal in Ohio today and will remain so after November 7 regardless of the outcome of the vote. Issue 1 is about:

- The elimination of existing health and safety standards for women seeking an abortion. In the words of Ohio Treasurer of State Robert Sprague, “The National Abortion Federation and Planned Parenthood believe the abortion industry should be allowed to set its own standards for safety, without oversight from the state. Someone could own a building with a pizza shop in front and an abortion clinic in back, and the pizza shop would have more regulations and supervision than the abortion clinic under Ohio law.”
- The elimination of parental notification and consent in the reproductive healthcare decisions of their minor children. “Reproductive healthcare” encompasses contraception, abortion and “gender reassignment” hormones and surgery. This undermining of parental authority would do irreparable damage to the family, the cornerstone of society. It would also open up minor children to a greater risk of abuse and even the possibility of human trafficking.
- Abortion up until full-term birth. Studies show that a significant majority of people, even those who are pro-choice, oppose abortion in the third trimester.

While the enduring teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the sanctity of every human life from conception to natural death is clear, the wording of the proposed amendment is not. Even its title – “The Right to Reproductive Freedom with Protections for Health and Safety” – is deceptive. This is why we need to actively oppose Issue 1, to educate people about the horrific effects the passage of this seemingly innocuous amendment would have on Ohio.

Some may contend that the Catholic Church should not be involved in politics. However, the defense of life and care for women compels our participation in this critical **moral** issue. As Catholics, we are morally obliged to uphold the dignity of life of all vulnerable humans – immigrants, the poor, preborn children, women in need. The Church cannot stand quietly on the sidelines when confronted with such a clear threat to the health and safety of women, the primacy of the family and the dignity of human life as proposed by Issue 1.

RADIATE CHRIST

How each person votes is a matter of his or her conscience involving individual freedom. Each person bears moral responsibility for his or her vote. As pastors, we have a responsibility to help inform consciences with the wisdom of Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Church. To do anything less would be a grave disservice.

Please use the five weeks remaining before election day to educate your parishioners about the truth of Issue 1 and oppose this radical attempt to reshape Ohio. Resources for your use are available at <https://catholicaoc.org/VoteNO> and guidance is available from Director of Respect Life Ministries Bob Wurzelbacher (513.263.6674, bwurzelbacher@catholicaoc.org).

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord and Savior, and St. Joseph, protector of the Holy Family, intercede for Ohio and its families in the days ahead.

Fraternally yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

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RADIATE CHRIST