



## Hallettsville Residents Encourage Council To Adopt ‘Sanctuary for the Unborn’ Ordinance

*The mayor has called for the ordinance to be placed on next month’s agenda for discussion and action.*

By **Mark Lee Dickson** | February 21, 2025

On Tuesday, February 18, 2025, the mayor and council members of Hallettsville, Texas (pop. 2,756) heard from residents throughout the community interested in seeing their city adopt a Sanctuary City for the Unborn (SCFTU) Ordinance. While the ordinance was not on the city council agenda for Tuesday’s meeting, the meeting ended with Mayor Alice Jo Summers calling for the ordinance to be placed on next month’s agenda for discussion and action. Upon hearing the news, State Representative A.J. Louderback (HD 30) shared, “As a staunch advocate for the unborn, I am excited to see Hallettsville City Council considering adopting a pro-life ordinance and standing up for our most vulnerable population. I encourage city leaders to adopt this policy to make Hallettsville and House District 30 a stronghold for the pro-life movement in Texas.”

Louderback was not the only representative to show support for the city taking action. The mayor and city council also received a letter from members of the Texas Legislature encouraging municipalities across Texas to consider such a measure. Twenty senators and representatives signed the letter, including Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (SD 18) and former House District 30 Representative Geanie W. Morrison.

The letter states:

*“While it is true that abortion is outlawed in the entire State of Texas, from the point of conception, our work is far from over. Right now, throughout the State of Texas, women are being trafficked across our borders by abortion traffickers funded by abortion trafficking organizations still operating in our state. As a result, these women are being abused and traumatized by abortion across our Texas-New Mexico border and sent back to Texas for our cities and counties to deal with the aftermath taking place in our homes, our schools, our churches, and our hospitals.*

*The Sanctuary for the Unborn ordinances seek to protect these institutions by putting safeguards in place to protect men, women, and their children for years to come. These ordinances, which seek to close as many loopholes as possible, do not penalize women who seek or undergo abortions, but places the penalty on the party who most deserves it — the abortionist and the industry profiting from the unjust procedure, including abortion traffickers.*

*While we intend to do our part to keep our strong pro-life protections for mothers and their unborn children, we believe it will help for cities and counties to do their part as well. As state elected officials who are trusted by Pro-Life Texans to stand for life at every available opportunity, we believe this is a viable and crucial opportunity for local governments to protect their most vulnerable members. We look forward to partnering with you as we seek to defend innocent human life at every level of government.”*

## **How the Effort to Further Outlaw Abortion in Hallettsville Began in Lavaca County**

The effort to see Hallettsville further outlaw abortion began in May 2024. Resident David Smolik heard about the ordinances passed in [Little River-Academy](#), [Muenster](#), and [Goliad County](#) and wanted to see his community pursue the same legislation. Smolik reached out to fellow Hallettsville community member Jerry Tanner, who is chairman of the Lavaca Rise Up for Life Committee. After several months of investigation, the committee determined that this initiative would be a worthwhile pursuit for the entire community. First, residents started to sign paper petitions. Then, residents started to sign the [online petition](#). Before long, hundreds of petition signatures had been collected, quickly surpassing the number of votes received by the mayor and city council at their previous elections. *“We made this extremely easy for our city council. There is no way any one of them can say that the number of signatures we have gathered from the members of our community is an irrelevant number,”* said Smolik. *“They know they have the support of the community.”*

Andrew Pesek, who serves as the pro-life chairman of the Victoria Diocese with the Knights of Columbus, and Mike Johnson, a local attorney and president of Hallettsville Right to Life, were just a few members of the Hallettsville community who shared before the city council, encouraging them to stand for life. Hallettsville Right to Life, which was founded in 1974, is one of the oldest pro-life organizations in the State of Texas.

Johnson shared how pro-life policies like the Sanctuary for the Unborn Ordinances and the Texas Heartbeat Act had proven themselves to be a force for good in our culture. *“The Texas Heartbeat Act, which uses the same private enforcement mechanism, shut down abortion operations on unborn children with detectable heartbeats all across Texas back in September of 2021. The laws worked, and they saved lives,”* Johnson said. *“When Lubbock County passed their prohibition on abortion trafficking using the same private enforcement mechanism as this ordinance would have, an abortionist in New Mexico reported that people in Texas had canceled their appointments. It was impacting his business. Praise God for that.”*



Mabry Machac, a junior at Sacred Heart Catholic School, shared: *“The world is broken. We must stand up for what is right. We must use the voices we were given to protect the lives of those who do not yet have a voice. From the womb, the baby can’t cry, ‘Mommy, keep me safe.’ So we speak on their behalf. Keep the unborn safe. Protect their rights. Improve our culture. Improve lives. Improve the future for all. I believe this ordinance should pass, because each life is a blessing, and every baby is a gift from God.”*

Brianna Clark, a senior at Sacred Heart Catholic School, shared: *“Although abortion is outlawed in Texas, the use of a pill to kill unborn babies is still being shipped into our borders, and their usage has spiked in overwhelming amounts. Not only does this abortion pill kill an innocent child, but has dangerous side effects to the mother as well. One in 25 women who take this drug are sent to the hospital, and our hospitals must deal with the aftermath. To know that the murder of babies and dangerous effects of this pill could possibly be going on in our city limits and in our community is the most disturbing part.”* Clark continued, *“I want Hallettsville to become a Sanctuary City for the Unborn because the preborn have a right to their future and the individual challenges*





*that they will face. It is scientifically proven that these babies in the womb are alive and growing, and they deserve as many freedoms as we have.”*

## **Lavaca County Voters on Abortion**

Those who spoke up on Tuesday night were not representative of a small minority in the community, but were representative of an overwhelming majority. We know this, because the citizens of Lavaca County have already voted on abortion twice, and each time there were overwhelming numbers in favor of life. During the 2018 Republican Party primary, voters had the opportunity to vote on Proposition #7. This proposition gave voters the opportunity to vote for or against the following statement: *“I believe abortion should be abolished in the State of Texas.”* In Lavaca County, out of 2,476 votes, a total of 1,983 (80%) voted in favor of the statement, and 493 (20%) voted against it.

During the 2020 presidential election, Donald Trump easily carried Lavaca County. A total of 8,804 (86%) voted for Donald Trump, while only 1,333 (13%) voted for Joseph Biden. This means a super-majority of those who voted in Lavaca County are in favor of abortion being abolished in the State of Texas. Even more recently, during the 2022 Republican Party primary on March 1, voters had the opportunity to vote on Proposition #5. This



proposition gave voters the chance to voice whether they were for or against the following statement: *“Texas should enact a state constitutional amendment to defend the sanctity of innocent human life, created in the image of God, from fertilization until natural death.”* In Lavaca County, out of 4,308 votes, a total of 3,966 (92%) voted in favor of the statement, and 342 (8%) voted against it. During the 2024 presidential election, Donald Trump carried Lavaca County by an even greater margin than he did before. A total of 9,215 (88%) voted for Donald Trump, while only 1,235 (12%) voted for Kamala Harris. This once again shows a super-majority of those who voted in Lavaca County are pro-life and in favor of doing more to protect the lives of unborn children.

## **In Alignment With the Republican Party of Texas’ Pro-Life Party Platform**

These citizens are not out-of-step with their party. Over the years, the Republican Party of Texas’ platform has given strong support to pro-life policies being passed throughout the Lone Star State. Lavaca County Republican Party Chair Lorena Kanak, who stands in full support of Hallettsville becoming a Sanctuary City for the Unborn, shared,

*“Lavaca County is close to a 90% Republican county. Part of our platform is upholding the sanctity of the unborn and promoting the protection of that life. I’m proud to live in a community who has strong values and embraces that life from fertilization till natural death. We must stand together in making our voices heard.”*

In 2024, the Republican Party of Texas' platform contained the following planks relevant to the provisions found in SCFTU Ordinances:

***Plank #194(l). Pro-Life:*** *Abortion is not healthcare, it is homicide. Until the abolition of abortion is achieved, we support laws that restrict and regulate abortion, including but not limited to ... Supporting the right of Texas municipalities to protect mothers and their preborn children in their communities by passing enforceable city ordinances that further ban abortions within their city limits, closing loopholes in state abortion laws.* (Found in Provisions 1-6, and Provision 7 of the SCFTU Ordinances)

***Plank #194(j). Pro-Life:*** *Abortion is not healthcare, it is homicide. Until the abolition of abortion is achieved, we support laws that restrict and regulate abortion, including but not limited to ... Extending the private cause of action used in the Texas Heartbeat Act to all pro-life laws and policies in Texas.* (Found in Provisions 1-6 and Provision 7 of the SCFTU Ordinances)

***Plank #53. Prohibit Abortion Transportation Across State Lines:*** *We support legislation to prohibit the use of any government funds, as well as the transportation of pregnant women across Texas' state lines, for the purpose of procuring an elective abortion and for the provision of a private right of action against all persons and organizations who aid and abet in the harming of the woman, and the killing of her preborn child.* (Found in Provisions 2-3 and Provision 7 of the SCFTU Ordinances)

***Plank #142. Preventing Any Death by Abortion:*** *... We support protecting preborn children and their mothers by stopping abortion pill distributors from sending and trafficking these lethal and illegal drugs into Texas and holding those accountable who break state Pro-Life laws by selling and trafficking illegal abortion pills.* (Found in Provision 4 of the SCFTU Ordinances)

## **In Closing**

One of the very first statements found in the proposed Hallettsville SCFTU Ordinance is a quote from Thomas Jefferson, which reads, *"The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government."* Smolik agrees with the quote wholeheartedly. While some council members in some parts of the state may think cities should not be considering such measures, Smolik disagrees—especially when council members' own local citizenry, their own state legislators, and Texas' own conservative party platform say otherwise. Smolik is confident that his city's leadership will not stand against Hallettsville's pro-life culture but will stand with it to *"make House District 30 a stronghold for the pro-life movement in Texas."* Hallettsville is not the only community whose residents are working to pass a Sanctuary City for the Unborn Ordinance. Residents in cities like Ennis (pop. 23,686), Shiner (pop. 2,174), and Moulton (pop. 886), are hard at work gathering both paper and online petition signatures. Residents who wish to see their city become a Sanctuary City for the Unborn are encouraged to sign the [online petition](#).