



Photo: Mark Lee Dickson

Residents of another Texas city urge local leaders to make it a 'Sanctuary City for the Unborn'

By [Mark Lee Dickson](#) | February 19, 2025, 5:39 PM

On Tuesday, February 18, 2025, the Mayor and Councilmembers of Hallettsville, Texas (pop. 2,756), were met with a chamber full of citizens interested in seeing their city pass a Sanctuary City for the Unborn (SCFTU) ordinance. At this meeting, a proposed ordinance written specifically for the City of Hallettsville was presented to the city leadership for their consideration. While this was the first time for the city council to hear such a presentation, leaders throughout the community have been working on the initiative since May 2024.

Hallettsville resident David Smolik had 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 resident 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.

Hallettsville Residents Speak Out

Tanner was the first to sign the [online petition](#) in June 2024. When filling out the online petition, Tanner wrote: *“I want to see abortion further outlawed in the City of Hallettsville because I do not want to see any support offered for elective abortions. I want others to know the values and sentiments of our community. I want like minded citizens to defend unborn children in our community and support the needs of their families.”*

Since then, hundreds from Hallettsville have signed the petition, each giving their own reasons for why they want to see abortion further outlawed in their city. David Smolik stated: *“It is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception. Abortion kills a human being. This is why I support Hallettsville becoming a sanctuary for the unborn. This is also why I support a national ban on abortion with no exceptions. At every level of government, a human life’s value should not be based on how or when that life was conceived.”*



When sharing why she wanted to see abortion further outlawed in her community, Ruth Rouse stated: *“Abortion destroys a human being at any stage of a pregnancy. Young women have been propagandized, manipulated, and desensitized to not consider the abortion process in any deep or profound way. With abortion not being an option for these misguided women, not only is the child protected, but the woman is protected from future mental angst, guilt, and trauma when she matures and fully grasps the full consequences of the deadly procedure. Two lives are saved when abortion is not an option.”*

Cheryl Draper said: *“I want to see abortion outlawed in Hallettsville because I know just how much abortion can take from someone’s life. I was an unmarried high school pregnant teen and I was demanded to have an abortion. I heard God say ‘No abortion.’ I did not do it and ran away from home. Forty years later that child is a pastor. Fifty-five years later he is a missionary in Ghana, Africa, and created 40 Jesus Schools of Discipleship across that country. God had a plan! The pro-life testimony shared at the city council meeting was no different.”*

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 of the Hallettsville residents who shared before their city council.

Hallettsville Right to Life, which was founded in 1974, is one of the oldest pro-life organizations in the State of Texas. According to their bylaws, Hallettsville Right to Life exists *“to promote respect for the worth and dignity of all human life, including the life of the unborn child.”* Johnson shared how pro-life policies, like the ‘sanctuary for the unborn’ ordinances and the Texas Heartbeat Act had proven themselves to be effective at stopping abortions and saving lives.

“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.”

Laura Varela, a senior at Sacred Heart Catholic School, shared: *“I believe Hallettsville should become a Sanctuary City for the Unborn because we have to be the voice for all of those innocent babies who do not have one. We are all responsible for protecting not only the unborn children of God but all individuals on this Earth. By becoming a Sanctuary City for the Unborn, we not only advocate for the babies in the womb but also for the mothers and families who need our support to give their children the lives they deserve.”*

Brianna Clark, another 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. 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. Above all, these human beings have a right to life! Unborn babies have the liberty to laugh, smile, and even cry. It is our right to ensure that they will receive these freedoms, because they may be our next teachers, doctors, electricians, or even police officers in our community. The motto of our city is ‘the city of hospitality’ so let’s use this motto to its true meaning and welcome every human being no matter the stage, born or unborn.”

Abortion and Hallettsville

The majority of elective abortions in America are chemical abortions where the first part of the abortion drug regimen is ingested at an abortion facility and then the second abortion drug is taken elsewhere afterwards. The closest abortion facilities to Hallettsville include the Planned Parenthood Wichita Health Center, Trust Women Wichita, or Aria Medical in Wichita, Kansas – all three which are located about 570 miles away. The next closest abortion facility is Women’s Reproductive Clinic of New Mexico in Santa Teresa, New Mexico – located about 600 miles away. All three of the abortion facilities in Wichita, Kansas, and the one in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, allow the abortion pill through 11 weeks and 0 days. Surgical abortions are performed in Wichita at Planned Parenthood Wichita Health Center through 13 weeks and 6 days, and at Trust Women Wichita

through 21 weeks and 6 days. In 2023, Planned Parenthood Great Plains president and CEO Emily Wales told [KUT News](#) that “around half of all patients at Planned Parenthood clinics in Kansas are Texans,” adding that the “heightened demand often surpasses the Wichita clinic’s capacity, and Texas patients are referred to the more distant Kansas City and Overland Park locations.”

The Proposed SCFTU Ordinance

The proposed SCFTU ordinance presented to the Hallettsville Mayor and City Council seeks to protect the health and welfare of all residents within the city of Hallettsville, including the unborn, by putting into place six provisions. These provisions (1) prohibit performing elective abortions and aiding or abetting elective abortions within the city limits of Hallettsville, (2) prohibit elective abortions on residents of Hallettsville – regardless of where the abortion takes place, (3) prohibit abortion trafficking, (4) prohibit abortion-inducing drugs, (5) prohibit criminal organizations from doing business inside the city limits of Hallettsville, and (6) prohibit the transport and disposal of the remains of unborn children killed by an elective abortion by abortion providers outside of the State of Texas. Abortion is defined by the proposed ordinance as *“the act of using, prescribing, administering, procuring, or selling of any instrument, medicine, drug, or any other substance, device, or means with the purpose to terminate the pregnancy of a woman, with knowledge that the termination by any of those means will with reasonable likelihood cause the death of an unborn child.”* The proposed ordinance is clear that the term does not include: *“In vitro fertilization or fertility treatments of any type; the use, prescription, administration, procuring, or selling of Plan B, morning-after pills, intrauterine devices, or any other type of contraception or emergency contraception; or an act performed with the purpose to: save the life or preserve the health of the unborn child; remove a dead unborn child caused by spontaneous abortion; or remove an ectopic pregnancy, the implantation of a fertilized egg or embryo outside of the uterus.”* If the proposed ordinance were to pass, it would be enforced the same way the Texas Heartbeat Act is enforced – through a private enforcement mechanism. The ordinance would allow any person — other than the city of Hallettsville and any officer or employee of the city — to have standing to bring a civil action against any person or entity that violates any of the six provisions of the SCFTU ordinance. In addition to providing protections for pregnant mothers and their unborn children, the proposed ordinance also educates members of the community on the Thriving Texas Families Program and the resources that can be obtained through centers listed on the Texas Pregnancy Care Network [website](#). The City of Hallettsville also received a letter from Attorney Jonathan F. Mitchell, committing to represent the City of Hallettsville at no cost to the city or taxpayers for any litigation that may arise from the passage of their ordinance outlawing abortion and abortion trafficking. Mitchell is the former Solicitor General of Texas and the architect of the Texas Heartbeat Act. The proposed ordinance is scheduled to be on the City Council’s agenda next month for discussion and action. At that meeting, the Hallettsville City Council will decide if they will accept or reject the pro-life measure.

Interest Continues to Spread Throughout Texas

Hallettsville is not the only place experiencing a groundswell of residents wanting to further protect pregnant mothers and their unborn children. Residents from other cities throughout Lavaca County and beyond are wanting to see their cities and their counties take action as well. Since June 2019, a total of 70 cities and eight counties have passed local ordinances outlawing abortion and declaring their jurisdictions ‘sanctuaries for the unborn.’ Those interested in seeing their city become a Sanctuary City for the Unborn are encouraged to sign the [online petition](#).