



### **Explainer on Bishops' Response to Alternative Ballot Proposal Providing Protections for Preborn Babies**

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, a ballot initiative proposal providing protections for preborn babies was launched by “Protect Women and Children”. This proposal differs from the morally evil pro-abortion proposal launched in November.

The newly launched proposal reads: “Except when a woman seeks an abortion necessitated by a medical emergency or when the pregnancy results from sexual assault or incest, unborn children shall be protected from abortion in the second and third trimester.”

The three Bishops of Nebraska—through the Nebraska Catholic Conference—stated it is morally permissible for Nebraskans to support the newly proposed initiative language, for the following reasons:

- The proposal provides constitutional protection for preborn babies during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester.
- The proposal leaves protections for preborn babies in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester and in cases of rape, incest, or medical emergency to the Nebraska Legislature.
- The proposal does *not* affect Nebraska’s current pro-life law which protects preborn babies at 12 weeks with exceptions for rape, incest, and medical emergency, and it leaves intact countless other health and safety laws passed over the last 50 years to protect women and babies from abortion.

The Bishops further determined that a voter can support the proposal, under the following conditions:

- The voter must understand that all abortion must be opposed, and that direct abortion is never morally acceptable under any circumstances.
- The voter must view this proposal as an incremental step toward full protection of all human life from abortion, and not as a permanent compromise. Supporters must remain committed to the effort of recognizing the right to life of all preborn children.<sup>1</sup>
- The voter must accept that the proposal does *not* create any right to abortion in the Nebraska Constitution. The Nebraska Legislature remains free to provide greater protection for human life.
- The voter must understand that this proposal is an imperfect alternative to the intrinsically evil pro-abortion ballot initiative proposal launched in November. That pro-abortion ballot initiative cannot be supported under any circumstance and must be rejected. To learn more about the problems with the pro-abortion ballot initiative, visit [www.NEcatholic.org](http://www.NEcatholic.org).

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<sup>1</sup> See Saint Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life), paragraph 73: “A particular problem of conscience can arise in cases where a legislative vote would be decisive for the passage of a more restrictive law, aimed at limiting the number of authorized abortions, in place of a more permissive law already passed *or ready to be voted on*. Such cases are not infrequent. It is a fact that while in some parts of the world there continue to be campaigns to introduce laws favoring abortion, often supported by powerful international organizations, in other nations—particularly those which have already experienced the bitter fruits of such permissive legislation—there are growing signs of a rethinking in this matter. In a case like the one just mentioned, when it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate a pro-abortion law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects.” (emphasis added)