

# CLERGY JOINT STATEMENT ON OHIO ISSUE 1

On November 7th, 2023, Ohioans will decide on Issue 1, whether to “VOTE NO” to defend the life and liberty of parents and children, or whether to enshrine arbitrary and undefined ‘reproductive decisions’ into Ohio’s Constitution. According to the drafted language, (1) the proposed right to be authorized into the Constitution is: “Every individual has a right to make and carry out one’s own reproductive decisions, including ***but not limited to*** decisions on contraception, fertility treatment, continuing one’s own pregnancy, miscarriage care, and abortion.” (Italics ours)

An approved constitutional amendment becomes the highest law of the land and may bring sweeping changes with it. If Issue 1 passes with a majority vote, existing laws on the books involving abortion, parental consent, and protection of minors will be considered legally invalid based on the ambiguous right of “reproductive decisions.” As lead clergymen from one hundred seventy-one (171) congregations, we believe the language of Issue 1 is deceptively vague and detrimental to the basic, inalienable, and GOD-given rights of parents and children. In fact, parents and children are not even mentioned in Issue 1.

We agree with credible healthcare professionals who say abortion is never medically necessary to protect the life of a mother in a high-risk pregnancy. (2) Unfortunately, Issue 1 will enshrine the special right to kill an already existing human being living in his or her mother’s womb. Based on the language drafted by the billion-dollar Planned Parenthood organization, this radical pro-abortion constitutional amendment will permit the abortion/murder of unborn babies throughout all nine months of pregnancy, even after heartbeat detection and after an unborn baby can feel pain.

In Deuteronomy 27, the Bible says, “Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person.”

Because of the indistinct language describing ‘reproductive decisions,’ Issue 1 will impose a blank check of abuses to occur on Ohio children including but not limited to: gender-selective abortions, trans-surgeries on minors, castration of children’s sexual organs, harvesting of body parts, and even cloning. In other words, Issue 1 will allow child abuse to exponentially increase without parents even knowing.

The language of Issue 1 also says “Abortion may be prohibited after fetal viability.” (Italics ours.) Fetal viability would be determined by the subjective opinion of an abortionist doctor treating the pregnant woman. Abortion-providers like Planned Parenthood, who make a killing off the murder of children in the womb, will be protected because they can claim exclusive authority by defining viability and avoid any form of liability for terminating the lives of babies.

Unfortunately, an approved constitutional amendment is much harder to reverse than laws which can be changed with each legislative session. If this wicked Issue 1 passes, the Ohio Legislature will not be able to modify or regulate this language. Further, this diabolical language cannot be challenged in Ohio’s Supreme Court since the Court is obligated by law to abide by the State Constitution as approved by the voters of the state.

In Matthew 18, the Bible vigorously says, “But who so shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

In closing, the Ohio faith community has consistently advocated for the sanctity of life and also advocated for moral clarity regarding childhood sexuality. (3-7) With the mandate from GOD, we will not be silent on issues affecting our culture.

**As key stakeholders from one hundred seventy-one (171) diverse congregations across 23 counties, we support the sanctity of life and believe the anti-family Issue 1 will normalize child abuse and strip parents of their God-given roles to raise their own children. This Fall on Tuesday November 7th, we encourage Ohioans to protect life and “VOTE NO” on Issue 1.**

The following lead clergymen representing one hundred seventy-one (171) congregations are urging registered Ohio voters to oppose the legalization of abortion/murder and VOTE NO on State Issue 1:

Pastor Joe Nichols, ARC Empowerment Center  
Pastor Jim Johnson, Mansfield Grace Temple  
Elder Henry Bradley, New Community Temple  
Pastor Clyde Kerby, Hope & Healing Ministries  
Pastor John Temple, Loudonville Trinity Church  
Pastor Bryan Schatzinger, Calvary Chapel  
Pastor Jason Price, Mansfield Victory Baptist  
Dr. Ricky Branham, Willard Ripley Chapel  
Pastor Kevin Evans, Ganges New Liberty Lifesong  
Dr. DeWayne Smith, Pricetown United Methodist  
Pastor Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren  
Pastor Larry Whited, Abundant Grace Fellowship  
Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont Community Church  
Pastor Paul Lintern, Southside Christian Church  
Elder James DeWeese, Providence Church  
Pastor Dan Barker, Cortland Trinity Baptist  
Pastor Aaron Rose, Madison Fusion Church  
Pastor Rob Ratcliff, North Woodbury Freewill  
Pastor Mike Rose, Hope on the Hill Chapel  
Pastor Mark Meyer, Lexington Gracepoint Church  
Pastor Larry Hill, Bethel Freewill Baptist  
Pastor Brad Gentile, Shelby First Baptist  
Pastor Dan Baer, Green Gospel Assembly  
Pastor Brian Phillips, New Beginnings Freewill  
Rabbi Bob Bauer Crestline Beit El Elyon  
Pastor Matt Merendino, Clear Fork Alliance  
Pastor Berry Carter, Massillon City Bible  
Bishop Greg Griffith, Willard Church of GOD  
Pastor Dan Zediker, Mansfield Mission Point  
Pastor Chad Berry, Lexington New Liberty Baptist  
Bishop Sylvester Ginn, Ontario Hesus Agape  
Pastor James Marshall, Ganges Community  
Pastor Faron Cole, Eastern Rd. Church of GOD  
Pastor Chaz Boes, Compassion Church of Toledo  
Pastor David Rentzel, Shelby Life Church  
Pastor Steve Burkhalter, Ontario Potter's House  
Pastor Troy Wooten, Christian Life Center  
Pastor Dink Porter, Mansfield Open Bible Church  
Pastor Steve Kistler, New Life Church of Christ  
Pastor Jerry O'Brien, Orville Faith Harvest Church  
Pastor Dallas Waggle, Lucas Foursquare Church  
Pastor Joseph Smith, Ontario Westside Baptist  
Pastor Clarence Sanderfer, New Life Baptist

Pastor John Grimm, Greenwich United Methodist  
Pastor John Grimm, Plymouth United Methodist  
Pastor Rick Wiseman, Promised Land Fellowship  
Bishop Andy Keim, Perry Amish District 1  
Pastor Ferlie Yates, Hanna Rd. Church of GOD  
Pastor Michael Constantino, Girard New Life Church  
Pastor George Lewis, Shelby Temple of GOD  
Pastor Louis Blevins, Latter Rain Church of GOD in Christ  
Pastor Doug Tackett, Taylortown Community Church  
Dr. DeWayne Smith, Newton Falls United Methodist  
Pastor Jeremy Rands, Monclova Road Baptist  
Pastor Walter Moss, Canton Foursquare Church  
Pastor Hank Webb, Belmont 96 Church  
Pastor Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran Church  
Pastor Russell Stanford, All Believers in Christ Church  
Pastor Joseph Yerger, First Evangelical Presbyterian  
Pastor Clint Zeigler, Sovereign Christ Church  
Pastor Art Kennard, Shelby Maranatha Christian Ctr.  
Pastors Les & Grace Farley, Lexington Irresistible Church  
Pastor Bill Fox, Crestline Faith Community  
Pastor Duane Hennen, Cortland Maranatha Church  
Pastor Eric Byrom, Mansfield Grace Fellowship  
Overseer Dan Baer, Mansfield Gospel Assembly  
Pastor Bobby Edwards, Jesus is Alive Holiness Church  
Pastor Lucian Baker, Fredericktown Christ the King Church  
Pastor Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center  
Pastor David Bates, Galion Unity Freewill  
Pastor Matt Schwartz, Bladensburg Church of GOD  
Pastor Aaron Boggs, Fredericktown Freewill Baptist  
Pastor Tim Houston, Mansfield Church of GOD  
Pastor Russ Smith, Shiloh Wesley Evangelical  
Pastor Taylor Howard, Apostolic Holiness Church  
Pastor Robert O'Brian, Mansfield Apostolic Faith  
Pastor Matt Potosky, Albion Church of the Brethren  
Pastor Dean Jackson, McElroy Rd. Church of Christ  
Pastor William Cole, Mansfield Recovery Church  
Pastor Rich Hurles, Plymouth LifePoint Church  
Pastor Denny Nezrick, Lexington Presbyterian Church  
Pastor Joe Silvestri, Wooster Bible Church  
Reverend El Akuchie, Godsfield House of Prayer  
Pastor Emeritus Steve Schag, Shelby Calvary Baptist  
Pastor Chad Hayes, Mansfield Caeserea Baptist  
Pastor LaMont Lindsay, Book of Life Church

Pastor David Mahon, Galion Apostolic Assembly  
 Pastor Mark Wireman, Shiloh Pentecostal Church  
 Pastor Mark Dettmer, Pleasant Grove Community  
 Pastor Matt O'Harra, Bellville First Baptist  
 Pastor Matt Pond, Shelby First Freewill Baptist  
 Pastor Brian Snow, Fredericktown First Baptist  
 Pastor Rick Lewis, Shelby Connect Church  
 Pastor Nickolas Kelly, North Liberty Church  
 Pastor Dana Gammill, Cathedral of Life Church  
 Pastor Juan Rivera, Victory Church Ohio  
 Pastor William Strader Jr., Bucyrus Alliance  
 Pastor Patrick Bailey, North Bend Church Brethren  
 Pastor Patrick Bailey, Danville Church of Brethren  
 Pastor James Mitchell, Polk New Liberty Baptist  
 Pastor Steve Brenneman, Awakening Church  
 Pastor Dave Davenport, Ontario Faith Baptist  
 Pastor John Campos, Bowman St. Church GOD  
 Pastor Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Temple Baptist  
 Pastor Steve Baldrige, Rome Community Church  
 Pastor Sam Belsterling, Community Bible Church  
 Pastor Mark Galambos, River of Life Church  
 Pastor Robert Caw, Newark Church Triumphant  
 Pastor Floyd Allen, Philippiian Community Church  
 Deacon Derrell Hall, Mansfield Holiness Chapel  
 Pastor Mark Cline, Berea Missionary Baptist  
 Pastor Layton Broome, Lakefork United Methodist  
 Pastor Richard Diamond, Diamond Hills Cathedral  
 Rabbi William Hallbrook, Ontario Sar Shalom Ctr.  
 Pastor Chris Spencer, Crestline Grace Baptist  
 Pastor Miler Montoya, Kingdom Vision Church  
 Pastor James Spencer, Mansfield Peoples' Baptist  
 Pastor Jeffrey Lord, Mayflower Congregational  
 Pastor Joshua Cole, Praise Family Church  
 Pastor Jeremy Huff, Church of Jesus Christ  
 Pastor David Garlich, Hubbard Calvary Baptist  
 Pastor Larry Carnes, Trinity Grace Fellowship  
 Pastor Jimmy Barnes, Mansfield Foursquare  
 Pastor Mark Cobb, Mansfield Providence Baptist  
 Pastor Matt Smith, Crestline Love Action Church  
 Pastor Andrew Stensaas, Eaton First Baptist  
 Pastor Art Nicolli, Girard Open Door Church  
 Pastor Paul Staton, Bellville Honey Creek Baptist  
 Pastor Timothy Ginter, Salem Church at the Center  
 Pastor J.C. Church, Victory in Truth Ministries  
 Pastor Randy Raynes, Mansfield Fellowship Baptist  
 Pastor David Parsons, Mansfield Zion's Refuge Baptist  
 Pastor Paul Bartholomew, Mohican Church of the Brethren  
 Pastor Jonathan Moore, Canfield Grace Family Church  
 Pastor Jerrill Wyler, Bucyrus Wayside Chapel  
 Pastor Ron Puff, Pleasant Valley Baptist Church  
 Pastor David Koehler, Loudonville Temple Baptist  
 Bishop Ben Greg, Plymouth Church of GOD  
 Pastor Jack Williams, Walker Lake Baptist  
 Pastor Robert Bird, Vermillion Baptist  
 Pastor Nathan Ward, Wooster Church of Nazarene  
 Pastor Mike Wilson, Lincoln Heights Baptist  
 Pastor Troy Thompson, Lorain Church on the North Coast  
 Pastor Joe Maggelet, Ashland Fellowship Christian  
 Pastor James Taylor, Shelby Alliance Church  
 Pastor Terry Garrett, Lexington Fusion Church  
 Elder Moe Hill, Grace Evangelical Free Church  
 Pastor Charles Burgess Jr., West Salem Church GOD  
 Pastor Dan Krause, Mansfield Berean Baptist  
 Pastor Nate Gailey, Hilltop Community Church  
 Dr. Jeff Mills, Mifflin Little Flock Fellowship  
 Pastor John Bouquet, Savannah Bethel Chapel  
 Pastor Paul Mathewson, Maranatha Bible Church  
 Pastor Layton Broome, Hayesville United Methodist  
 Pastor Tim Sheets, Middletown Oasis Church  
 Rabbi Michael Wolf, Beth Messiah Congregation  
 Pastor Gary Click, Fremont Baptist Temple  
 Pastor Glen Phillips, Hillside First Church of GOD  
 Pastor David Holbrook, Warren Revival Center  
 Pastor James Hill, Mansfield Paradise Church  
 Pastor Justin Lawhorn, Crestline New Vision Church  
 Pastor Rick Sutter, Elm Street Freewill Baptist  
 Pastor David Howell, Powerhouse Worship Center  
 Pastor Ed Colegrove, Edison Enterprise Baptist  
 Pastor Steve Hodges, Galion Gospel Baptist  
 Rabbi Michael Oyler, Star in the East Congregation  
 Pastor George Swain, Homerville Grace Brethren  
 Pastor Ken Ginter Jr., Ontario Abundant Life Tabernacle  
 Pastor Sheldon Mencer, Mission 3:16 Church  
 Pastor Ray Cochran, Mansfield Oasis of Love Church  
 Pastor Nathanael Fugate, Shreve Community Church

The above listed clergy co-signers have congregations located in 23 counties throughout Ohio. Counties with the most congregations represented: Richland (100), Crawford (12), Ashland (9), Trumbull (8), Wayne (8), Knox (6), Huron (4), Morrow (4), Stark (4), Lucas (2), Mahoning (2), Columbiana (1), Coshocton (1), Franklin (1), Licking (1), Lorain (1), Marion (1), Medina (1), Portage (1), Preble (1), Sandusky (1), Summit (1), & Warren (1).

## References:

- 1) See the language/ Ohio Ballot Initiative, Ohio RoundTable, <https://seethelanguage.com/>
- 2) Live Action Pro Life Response to: 'Abortion can be medically necessary,' <https://prolifereplies.liveaction.org/medically-necessary/>
- 3) 'Not healthcare': 160 Ohio pastors call on lawmakers to pass stricter abortion ban," by Clare Marie Merkowsky, Lifesite News, August 12, 2022, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/not-healthcare-160-ohio-pastors-call-on-lawmakers-to-pass-stricter-abortion-ban/>
- 4) "Ohio pastors challenge judicial tyranny on abortion," by Charlie Butts, American Family News, May 19, 2018, <https://www.onenewsnow.com/church/2018/05/19/ohio-pastors-challenge-judicial-tyranny-on-abortion>
- 5) "Area pastors pursue resolution to support defunding Planned Parenthood," by Rhonda Bletner, Richland Source, September 27, 2015, [https://www.richlandsource.com/news/area-pastors-pursue-resolution-to-support-defunding-planned-parenthood/article\\_3b14126a-652e-11e5-9c51-b30c811b6737.html](https://www.richlandsource.com/news/area-pastors-pursue-resolution-to-support-defunding-planned-parenthood/article_3b14126a-652e-11e5-9c51-b30c811b6737.html)
- 6) "Girls feel unsafe using school restrooms after district quietly implements trans policy, 100 local clergy members & parents allege," by Candace Hathaway, The Blaze, January 6, 2023, <https://www.theblaze.com/news/girls-feel-unsafe-using-school-restrooms-after-district-quietly-implements-trans-policy-100-local-clergy-members-and-parents-allege?ref=upstract.com>
- 7) "100+ pastors tell Ohio schools to ignore transgender bathroom mandate, by Courtney Day, USA Today, August 3, 2016, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/08/03/100-pastors-tell-ohio-schools-ignore-transgender-bathroom-mandate/87996882/>