January 15, 2020

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for a Constitutional Amendment to Reverse the 2019 Kansas Supreme Court Ruling on Abortion

Dear Members of the Kansas Legislature:

> *Life, not death, is the goal of humanity. History testifies that death is never the means through which justice and human rights prevail. We do not advance on the graves of our children.*
>
> ~ Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
> LCMS President

My name is Rev. Justin Panzer. I am the president of the LCMS Kansas District, which is one of 35 districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), the second-largest Lutheran church body in the country.

At the 2018 Kansas District convention, delegates from our 160 churches passed a resolution affirming the sanctity of life. In keeping with that resolution, I favor a constitutional amendment to reverse the 2019 Kansas Supreme Court ruling in *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt*. The proposed amendment is a much-needed corrective to the court's regrettable decision, which effectively declared abortion to be a right guaranteed by our state constitution.

My reasons for supporting the proposed amendment parallel those of LCMS President Rev. Matthew Harrison, who in January 2019 issued a statement on life (available at *lcms.org*) in response to gubernatorial actions in Illinois and New York that extended abortion rights. President Harrison's statement, unanimously endorsed by all 35 LCMS district presidents, is just as applicable here in Kansas as in other states that have recently weakened protections for life.

The statement reads in part:

> *We live as citizens in this world, and we seek to be obedient to our nation's laws. We thank God for our leaders and for this great land He has given to us and for its precious freedoms and opportunities. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod advocates strong citizenship and active participation in government. We obey the laws of our land and encourage those around us to do so.*
>
> *We are, however, bound by our conscience to speak against those laws that are unjust and, especially, those laws that violate God's law and the natural law that binds all mankind. Abortion and other means through which humans kill humans violate these natural and moral laws that form the foundation of society.*

Therefore, we stand against these actions and against all laws that sanction abortion or the taking of innocent life. We cannot stand silent when people elected to positions in which they are to protect citizens continue to pass laws and advocate for legislation that undermines the sanctity of human life. Our conscience is bound by both the Word of God and reason to speak for life as a precious gift of God and to speak against any and all who promote the killing of unborn children. We cannot hide the evil of these laws under the banner of "rights" or "privilege." Children's lives are at stake. They cannot speak for themselves. We will speak for them, and we will work to protect their lives.

And we will continue to work to love and support the women who face difficult choices or suffer from the consequences of abortion. We support young mothers who have chosen life for their children. We work to provide adoption and other opportunities to care for children in need. And we continue to show God's mercy to all, just as He, in Jesus, has mercy on all.

We will work, love and pray that all might know the love of Jesus and trust in Him for salvation. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

The Kansas Supreme Court's decision in *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt* has seriously undermined the sanctity of life in Kansas. A proposed constitutional amendment—allowing for the voice of many, not just a few—would put us on a more reasonable course.

Life is a God-given gift that should be protected, not threatened and devalued. We stand with other Kansans in asking you to support the proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

Rev. Justin A. Panzer
President, LCMS Kansas District