



VTB Parish Message

I want to thank Father for inviting me to be here today to share with you about the Value Them Both Kansas Amendment vote on August 2nd. I hope to provide clarity amidst much misinformation on what this means for Kansas.

First, I feel very blessed to be a part of the work we do in the Respect Life Office. In addition to youth education, support at end of life, and the building of our new Foster Care Ministry, the majority of our work right now surrounds the defense of the unborn child and support of women facing difficult pregnancies. Our Archdiocesan programs – the Gabriel Project, Walking With Moms in Need, all the work of Catholic Charities – support these women and families, connecting them with one of the many local Pregnancy Resource Centers that offer free services and materials, during pregnancy and long after a child is born, so they can choose to either parent or form a loving adoption plan, and a healthier future for themselves.

We also realize that this topic may be very painful for those who have been hurt by abortion. We invite with open arms any woman or man in need to experience the healing mercy of Jesus through our Project Rachel & Joseph ministries.

The name of the Value Them Both amendment is so important. It says we Kansans value the lives of unborn children **and** we also value and desire to protect the safety and health of women who are vulnerable due to a crisis situation. *If people took the time to fully understand this amendment, they would support it no matter what side of the issue they are on.*

It is also important to understand that the Church not only has the right to advocate for this amendment but we have an obligation to do so. Unlike lobbying for a candidate or a political party, the Church is standing for a human rights *issue* that is foundational to our religious beliefs.

This is a defining moment in Kansas.

In a 2019 ruling, the KS Supreme Court claimed to have “discovered” a fundamental right to abortion in our state’s 1859 Constitution which now makes it nearly impossible to regulate abortion in Kansas even in the simplest of ways (1).

According to the Supreme Court, all of our existing pro-life laws that limit and regulate the abortion industry are now presumed unconstitutional – essentially making them unenforceable and at risk of being struck down. This ruling has cleared the path for unlimited abortion in unregulated facilities paid for by tax dollars (2). Even now that Roe is overturned, this does not change what we are facing in Kansas and in fact makes Value Them Both even more important.

What exactly will Value Them Both do?

Voting YES will restore our KS Constitution, returning it to the way it was before the Supreme Court made its ruling, and once again allowing Kansans to limit and regulate the abortion industry through our elected

officials just as we have done for the past 25 years. It will also safeguard our existing restrictions on the industry such as:

- no tax-payer and late-term, extreme procedures
- the parental notification law that protects minor girls from being dropped off at an abortion facility without a parent being notified
- The Woman's Right to Know Act which requires that women be given thorough information about her baby and the physical and long-term risks of abortion.

Voting YES will protect these common-sense restrictions. Voting NO ensures that all limits could be struck down by abortion industry lawsuits. Already lawsuits have struck down two of our laws:

- 2015 ban on painful Live Dismemberment Abortions and
- 2011 law requiring basic safety standards, licensing and inspections of abortion clinics that protect the women inside of abortion facilities (3). This industry that claims to be "healthcare for women," sued a law that treats them like healthcare for women. Thanks to the Supreme Court ruling, this law was struck down this past December. We need to pass Value Them Both to reinstate it.

Unfortunately, the opposition is intentionally confusing people with misinformation. **First Value Them Both does not ban all abortion.** After Value Them Both passes, abortion will still be legal in Kansas and we will still need to help women to choose life for their child.

Their ads are also scaring women into thinking they will not be able to receive treatment for ectopic pregnancies, miscarriages or other pregnancy complications. This could not be further from the truth. Value Them Both addresses abortion policy. Medical treatments for these heartbreaking situations are not considered abortions and every abortion limit has protection for the life of the mother. This will not change if Value Them Both passes.

The fact is, without Value Them Both, we will become a destination state for unlimited abortion in unregulated facilities. Already over half of all abortions in KS are done on women coming here from out of state (4).

Here's what you can do to help:

- Above all, please pray for the passage of Value Them Both.
- Mark your calendar to vote YES on August 2nd or vote early if you will be gone that day.
- Please share this information with others. This is not the time to be timid but a time for courage. This is a spiritual battle and Truth is on our side. If we share the Value Them Both message with love and compassion, hearts and minds will be changed.

Most importantly let others know about the life-affirming ministries of the Church and pregnancy help centers across our state. Let's not let Kansas become a destination for painful late-term abortions paid for by our tax dollars. Let's instead make Kansas a place for life where lives of women and pre-born children are valued!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the unborn, and St. Joseph, defender of life, please pray for us.

Sources:

(1) Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt, 309 Kan. 610 (2019)

(2) Paul Benjamin Linton, Esq. and Elizabeth R. Kirk, Esq., 2/19/2020

(3)<https://kfl.org/judge-strikes-abortion-facility-sanitation-and-safety-law-kansas-one-step-closer-to-unlimited-abortion/>

(4) Kansas Department of Health and Environment, "Abortions in Kansas, 2021" report