



September 6, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

News of Amendment 4, a dangerous pro-abortion amendment which will appear on the Florida ballot this fall, has no doubt reached you by now. The amendment is misleading in its language, and dangerous not only for full-term babies, but women, and girls. It is my hope that once you look into the facts of this proposed change to Florida's state constitution, you will unequivocally vote "no" in November.

Keep in mind, if you will, that the word "no" is not always negative . . . And in this case, it is not only a "positive," it is positively crucial, and even lifesaving! Plan to do something positive by saying "yes" to life by voting "no" in November.

Why vote "no" on Amendment 4?

Titled "Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion," this amendment would embed unregulated abortion in the state constitution, establishing an unlimited right to abortion throughout the pregnancy, making Florida one of the most pro-abortion states in the nation.

Amendment 4 would allow for second and third trimester abortions, a stark contrast to Florida's current Heartbeat Protection Law which allows abortion up until a heartbeat can be detected, at about six weeks gestation. Although in a perfect world any abortion would be unthinkable, it is certainly preferable to have some limits on when it is legal.

This amendment allows for abortion for any reason, including consideration of the "patient's health," which is undefined in the amendment. Current Florida law includes an exception for when the pregnant woman's life is in danger, among many other exceptions. Further, Amendment 4 puts not only babies, but women and girls at risk. The amendment weakens the current medical doctor requirement, allowing "healthcare providers," not just physicians, to determine if an abortion is necessary to protect the mother's health. This is dangerous for women.

The Amendment also eliminates the currently required parental "consent" for a minor to have an abortion, preserving only parental "notification." This is reckless, and destructive, for girls, and their families.

In short, Amendment 4 goes dangerously beyond even what was permitted in the *Roe v. Wade* ruling. It is extreme, and unnecessary. There is simply no need to expand what is an already expansive abortion law in Florida.

Some have said that the Church has no place in politics. It is true that the Church would never suggest you vote for a particular candidate. However, in this election year, it is critically important to remember that shaping the moral character of society is a responsibility of people of faith, and a basic part of the mission we have received from Jesus Christ. In this case, when confronted with such a clear threat to human life and dignity, the Church must not be silent and simply cannot remain on the sidelines.

Let us unite in prayer to defeat this expansive, pro-abortion amendment, and vote "no" on Amendment 4 in November.

Thank you, and God Bless!

+ Bishop Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida