

# Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



## Our Civic and Moral Duty

To be a voice in the public square during these days when voting is taking place on Issue 1, I recently presented an Op-Ed, "What is the Issue?," to the secular press, which I present to you in this column. You will note that it intentionally does not use Catholic language, no scripture quotes, no Catechism or Papal references. Why? Because today being today, the public often rejects outright anything which even hints of religion. Instead, the article is an appeal to reason! To assist you and those with whom you will interact, I want to provide this reasoned approach to a thoroughly unreasonable amendment.

As Catholics, protecting, defending, nurturing and caring for all human life is a moral imperative. But the life of the most innocent, the most vulnerable, the most defenseless among us, the unborn baby in the womb, must be our preeminent concern. Issue 1 will take abortion to an unprecedented level, enshrining in our State Constitution the "right" to take the life of a baby, even one about to born!

### "What is the Issue?"

"In these weeks and on November 7<sup>th</sup>, we will have the opportunity and responsibility as good citizens to cast a vote on Issue 1, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of Ohio. At first glance, some believe that the issue is only about keeping abortion legal, when in fact abortion is already legal

in the State of Ohio, up to fetal viability. This amendment, however, seeks to make abortion, in its most radical form, a right enshrined in our Constitution, in direct contradiction to the Declaration of Independence, which holds as a self-evident truth that all are endowed with the first unalienable right: the right to life. So abortion, in the end, is not the issue. Then what is?

Some will say it is a political issue. But this is not an issue of partisan politics, and we are not being asked to elect one candidate as opposed to another. This is not a democratic or republican issue; it is not an independent or green issue. Then what is it?

Some will say it is a religious issue. But this is not an issue of religious affiliation, and not the sole concern of one religion as opposed to another. This is not a Catholic or Evangelical issue; it is not a Muslim or Jewish issue. Then what is it?

Some will say it is an individual issue. But this is not an issue affecting only one person or concerning only certain members of our society. This is not a "my" issue or a "your" issue; it is not a liberal or conservative issue. Then what is it?

So what is the issue? Simply put, it is a human issue! The proposed amendment should compel all persons of goodwill who are committed to human rights, to

Vote NO

Issue 1  
Nov. 7

human development, to human flourishing, to human protections and to human goodness, to vote no for one reason: the amendment is inhuman.

Inhuman because it rejects and disrespects the rights of women and girls of Ohio, inhuman because it rejects and disrespects the rights of parents, inhuman because it rejects and disrespects the rights of the baby about to be born.



When one reads the language of the amendment, one understands that the issue, in the end, is not the legality of abortion, but human rights. There is a reason that the language of the amendment never mentions familiar human language: woman, girl, mother, father, parent, child, baby. There is a reason the crafters of the amendment language were enraged when more human language was included in the final version of the ballot. I invite you to read the language of the amendment itself, and seriously to consider what the language really means here: [www.toledodiocese.org/voteno](http://www.toledodiocese.org/voteno).

Read the language and read between the lines! Make no mistake, the proposed amendment would not only enshrine abortion into the Ohio Constitution, but take it to its furthest extreme by placing women and girls at risk in an unregulated abortion environment, by undermining the rights of parents to know if their young children are being counseled, encouraged and assisted in having abortions or receiving life changing hormonal treatments against their will, and by permitting late term abortions through nine months of pregnancy, even up until birth!

How telling to note that as humans, we delight in the announcement of the zoo that an animal mother is pregnant, we anxiously await the birth of her babies,

even name them before they are born, and mourn them if they are lost! How telling to note that in a great many schools in the State of Ohio, parents or

guardians must give permission for their minor children to receive even an aspirin; and according to Ohio law, they must sign a minor child's application for a driver's license or permit, they must give consent for their minor child to have their ears pierced or to get a tattoo. According to

the proposed amendment, however, a minor could have a life altering surgical procedure without the consent of parents!

So what is the issue? Issue 1 is not a political issue, it is not a religious issue, it is not an individual issue. In the end, Issue 1 is a human issue that affects all persons and our entire community, regardless of political or religious affiliations.

As human persons, we are created good, we are made for good and made to do good. I encourage all people of goodwill to exercise their right to vote, to defend human rights, and to vote no on Issue 1 in accord with our human nature!"

In closing, dear friends, you've heard me say and I say it again: to be Catholic is to be Pro-Life, from conception to natural death. The amendment on which we are being asked to vote is nothing short of evil. I urge you to exercise your civic duty to vote, and I urge you to fulfill your moral duty to vote NO on Issue 1.

*+ Daniel E. Thomas*

Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas  
Bishop of Toledo  
October 13, 2023