

Crawford passes symbolic abortion ban

Council declares 'sanctuary city for the unborn'

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Crawford, best known as the home of the nearby former Western White House of past President George W. Bush, has become a "sanctuary city for the unborn" by a unanimous vote of the city council.

The ordinance, passed Tuesday by the city council, makes it illegal for someone to have an abortion or to "aid and abet" an abortion in the city limits of Crawford.

Despite the fact that there are no clinics, hospitals or abortion providers in the small town of 700 residents 20 miles west of Waco, ordinance organizer Dennis Daniel, a Crawford resident, said he does not view the passage of the ordinance as a mere symbolic gesture.

"I wanted to prevent abortion clinics from spreading to small towns in the future, and frankly, I proposed it to the city of Crawford because I live here and so we could demonstrate a leadership position in Central Texas," said Daniel, 62, who is retired from the defense and semiconductor industry.

Mayor Brian Porter declined comment on the ordinance. Council Member Cindy Vannatta said in a press release from ordinance proponents that "Crawford is honored to stand up for the unborn to make sure that no babies are killed in our city limits by abortion."

Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas representatives did not return phone calls seeking comment for this story.

Crawford City Attorney Charles Buenger said the council did not ask him to review the ordinance before the vote and he was unaware it was being considered.

Daniel, a 1977 graduate of Bishop Louis Reicher Catholic School in Waco, said he was surprised to learn Planned Parenthood provides abortions at its Waco facility when he moved back to this area and has since become an active "prayer warrior" outside the clinic.

"I grew up in Waco and moved back here four years ago and I realized that Planned Parenthood had opened up a facility in Waco about a mile from where I grew up," Daniel said. "It struck me as unusual that a city that boasts as

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conservatively as Waco does has an abortion provider in the city."

Crawford becomes the 36th city in the nation and the 33rd in Texas to adopt such an ordinance, according to the press release from petition organizers.

Daniel and John Pisciotta, founder and director of Pro-Life Waco, were among the ordinance supporters in attendance at the Crawford City Council meeting.

"With the unanimous Crawford City Council vote for a Sanctuary City for the Unborn ordinance, this great pro-life movement has arrived in greater Waco," Pisciotta said in the press release. "I commend the local leaders of Crawford and their City Council members for standing boldly for babies in the womb and their moms. I hope and pray this is just the beginning of communities in Central Texas defending the precious little ones who cannot defend themselves."

According to the ordinance, "It shall be unlawful for any person to procure or perform an abortion of any type and at any stage of pregnancy in the City of Crawford, Texas," and "It shall be unlawful for

any person to knowingly aid or abet an abortion that occurs in the City of Crawford, Texas."

Abortion is defined in the ordinance as "the act of using or prescribing an instrument, a drug, a medicine, or any other substance, device, or means with the intent to cause the death of an unborn child of a woman known to be pregnant."

The ordinance does not include the use of birth control devices or oral contraceptives, according to the press release. The ordinance also states it is not considered an abortion if the procedure is done with the intent to "save the life or preserve the health of an unborn child" or "remove a dead, unborn child whose death was caused by accidental miscarriage" or to "remove an ectopic pregnancy."

The Crawford ordinance also outlaws the possession or distribution of abortion-inducing drugs within the city limits, defining those products as "mifepristone, misoprostol, and any drug or medication that is used to terminate the life of an unborn child." The ordinance does not include "Plan B, morning-after pills or emergency contraception."

Under the terms of the ordinance, those who provide abortions or aid an abortion provider are subject to fines, according to the press release.



ROD AYDELOTTE, TRIBUNE-HERALD FILE PHOTO

The Crawford City Council passed an ordinance last week banning abortions in the town of 700 with no hospitals, clinics or abortion providers.