Gov. Perry Endorses "Choose Life" License Plate Legislation

Supports free speech for pro-life Texans

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Thursday, December 18, 2008

Good afternoon and thank you all for being here today. It is appropriate for us to be here today to celebrate life just one week before so many will commemorate the birth of a baby who changed the world.

Standing with me is a sampling of people who believe wholeheartedly in the sanctity of life, and are willing to stand up and be counted.

People like Representative Larry Phillips from Sherman, Joe Pojman of the Texas Alliance for Life, and Kelly Shackleford from the Free Market Foundation.

We’re also joined by several families who have direct, personal experience with adoption, like Kimberly Speirs and her son Michael, and Alison Morales who offered her child for adoption.

I’m also pleased to welcome representatives of the Catholic Diocese of Austin, the Texas Catholic Conference, and the Trinity Legal Center.

Joining them are folks from Concerned Women for America of Texas, 40 Days for Life, the Gabriel Project and several pregnancy resource centers.

Thank you all for being here and thank you for adding your voices to the Texas-wide chorus that speaks for the innocent unborn. As a member of that chorus myself, I am here today to endorse an effort that will allow Texans to support the humane choice of adoption.

Over the past several years, we have won some very important victories in this building, as we worked to better align Texas laws with
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Texas values. Those efforts range from a ban on using tax dollars for abortion procedures, to a Prenatal Protection Act that protects unborn children from assault, to an informed consent law that has helped expectant mothers better understand the risks and consequences of abortion.

These efforts have strengthened our state’s culture of life, but statistics indicate that we have a long way to go. According to the latest statistics, nearly 20% of Texas pregnancies are terminated every year. That equates to roughly 80,000 lives cut short.

Those children may have been born into tough circumstances, but that doesn't change the fact that every life is precious, and every child has a future that counts. I firmly believe that there is no such thing as an unwanted child.

I have spoken to so many men and women, prospective moms and dads across our state, who would give just about anything for the chance to love a child they can call their own.

I am firmly committed to making abortion the exception, not the rule for unplanned, unwanted pregnancies in Texas. I don't know too many people who would disagree with my view that adoption is the far more appropriate option. That is why I am wholeheartedly supporting proposed legislation authorizing a new license plate with a simple message: “choose life.”

For those who are champions of choice, this is a wonderful approach. Here in Texas, vehicle owners can choose from roughly 150 different license plate designs and show their support for causes ranging from coastal conservation to the March of Dimes to my alma mater.

No driver will ever be forced to purchase this plate. However, those who make that choice will not only have a visible sign of their values, but will also be contributing to programs that encourage and support adoption.

This concept has strong precedent. Nineteen other states currently offer a similar plate whose designs have survived legal challenges from a variety of special interest groups.

Texans who believe in the sanctity of life will have another way to tell the world in a subtle but meaningful way. I hope that our Legislature will unite to offer them that opportunity.

Now, here to talk about his plans to sponsor this important legislation is District 62 Representative Larry Phillips. Larry?

[PHILLIPS SPEAKS]

Thank you, Larry. You can count on me and my team as you guide this bill through the Legislature.

Next, I would like to introduce a man who has devoted his life to the defense of the unborn. Please welcome Dr. Joe Pojman, Executive Director of the Texas Alliance for Life.

[POJMAN SPEAKS]

Thank you, Joe and thank you for your graceful but unyielding efforts to reform the laws of our state to protect the unborn.

Now, to put a face on the adoption debate, I would like to introduce to you Kimberly Speirs, a woman whose family has benefited greatly from one mother’s choice of adoption. Kimberly?
Once again, I would like to thank everyone for being here today and would like to state in no uncertain terms that this license plate program will be good for Texas.

The success of the program will ultimately be measured with an increase of adoptions across our state. That is success we can all live with.