



For Immediate Release – official church statement on BB 203

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Missouri Synod Lutherans join St. Louis Archdiocese in opposing BB 203

ST. LOUIS — The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a national church body of 2 million members headquartered in St. Louis County, joins the Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis, in opposing Board Bill 203, a proposed ordinance to amend the existing antidiscrimination law of the City of St. Louis. The aim of this Bill is to add “pregnancy and reproductive health decisions as protected classes.”

“It is sad enough that the proponents of Board Bill 203AA seek special protection for unqualified termination of life in the womb, such that non-profit organizations, businesses, property owners and individuals are stripped of first amendment guarantees of the ‘free exercise of religion,’” said Harrison, who noted that many conscientious people object to abortion as a matter of ethical and or religious principal.

“Such individuals could by this bill be forced to participate in activities supporting the taking of human life. They could well lose their livelihood should they object to such participation, or be subject to fines and penalties for refusing to have their property used to aid and assist the taking of innocent life by abortion. This is unacceptable, and we shall urge our faithful to protest, oppose and appeal such legislation if enacted.”

The LCMS is deeply committed to the St. Louis community, having participated in this community since 1839. Missouri Synod Lutherans have provided thousands upon thousands with care in time of need, and far beyond our own faith community (from the cholera epidemic of 1849, to thousands of adoptions, orphanages, a hospital, agencies addressing human need, provision for housing, neighborhood revitalization, education and much more). Precisely by service to those most vulnerable, Missouri Synod Lutherans have earned the right to participate in the life of this great city without recrimination over the fact that our views on the sacredness of human life have not and will not change.

The proposed legislation for the city of St. Louis threatens the Synod’s beliefs about the sanctity of human life. The individual congregants of the LCMS who worship at our altars and who send their children to our schools are also business owners and employees who serve their neighbors in every sector across the metro region. We stand for life from conception to natural death. We confess that

life is a gift of God and He alone decides its beginning and end. The LCMS seeks to reflect God's love for all life by serving our neighbors and protecting all life, including the unborn. The Church and her agencies must not be coerced to compromise our consciences, which are shaped and formed by deeply held religious beliefs and moral decisions. Therefore, all people of faith must stand together to oppose this legislation and any other such legislation that restricts our ability and freedom to live what we believe, Harrison said.

“The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its family of churches and agencies will not accept any abortion sanctuary bill,” said Harrison. “We will, however, participate in the life of this great community. We will continue to love and serve this community. And above all, we shall pray that its conscience for the fundamental human right, that of life, be re-awakened for the sake of those most vulnerable to the lie which is abortion.”

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