



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Parish Advisory on Texas Right to Life

The organization Texas Right to Life at times seeks volunteers from parishes and Catholic schools to participate in their efforts. We write to inform you of our concerns with Texas Right to Life and we urge parishes not to participate in their activities or allow the organization to use parish sites. ([Texas Right to Life](#) is not to be confused with [Texas Alliance for Life](#) or [Texans for Life Coalition](#), which are separate organizations and remain consistent with the bishops' positions.)

1. **Conflicts on pro-life reform.** Texas Right to Life often opposes the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops and has implied that the bishops do not faithfully represent Church teaching. Part of the dispute is rooted in Texas Right to Life's rejection of incremental pro-life reforms, which bishops support following the guidance of St. John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae*. An incremental reform is one which improves the current situation but does not reform the status quo as much as we might desire. It is "incrementally" better than the status quo. *Evangelium Vitae* states:

A particular problem of conscience can arise in cases where a legislative vote would be decisive for the passage of a more restrictive law, aimed at limiting the number of authorized abortions, in place of a more permissive law already passed or ready to be voted on... This [vote] does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects. (EV, 73)

2. **Conflicts on end-of-life reform.** The bishops have been compelled to publicly correct Texas Right to Life's misstatements on end-of-life care and advance directives, in which Texas Right to Life implied that the legislation the bishops were supporting allowed euthanasia and death panels rather than the reality

that the legislation reflected the long-standing Church teaching requiring a balance of patient autonomy and the physician conscience protection.

3. **Texas Right to Life's voter guide.** Finally, Texas Right to Life publishes a scorecard that purports to show which Texas legislators are pro-life. We believe this publication is not based on a fair analysis of a legislator's work, but rather upon whether the legislator has followed voting recommendations of Texas Right to Life. Unfortunately, a number of legislators who have consistently voted for pro-life and end of life legislation have been opposed by Texas Right to Life.

Catholics must continue to engage. This guidance should not be used to discourage pro-life ministry or advocacy in any way. To this end, we strongly recommend that Catholics volunteer at and contribute to their local:

- diocesan Respect Life office,
- Gabriel Project,
- Project Rachel,
- 40 Days for Life, and
- pregnancy resource centers, which can be found by visiting the Texas Pregnancy Care Network's [Find a Provider](#) page.

We encourage all Catholics to engage in pro-life legislative advocacy by engaging with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, joining the [Texas Catholic Advocacy Network](#), and by supporting pro-life groups which engage in respectful legislative advocacy.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses and ordinariates located in the State of Texas. For more information, please call us at 512-339-9882, visit us online at txcatholic.org, or email jennifer@txcatholic.org.