



Office of
the Bishop

CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF GRAND ISLAND

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Dear Priests, Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Grand Island,

As Catholics, our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to exercise our moral responsibility on social and political issues. While involvement in politics can sometimes be perceived in a negative light, we know that Jesus has come to redeem every aspect of our lives, including our political order. He has called each of us to bear His light in the public square, and to strive for a just and good society.

As we approach this upcoming election cycle, we are called to inform our consciences on the candidates running for public office and understand the issues we will vote on, and to make good moral decisions. We do this rooted in our love of Jesus and the teachings of our Catholic faith.

Among the issues on the upcoming ballot, Nebraskans are facing an election of historic proportions on the issue of abortion. Two competing constitutional amendment initiatives have been approved for placement on the ballot, and our votes on these matters will mean the difference between life and death in our state.

Initiative 439 is a proposal that would insert a right to late-pregnancy abortion in our state constitution. I am urging all Nebraskans, especially Catholics, to vote AGAINST Initiative 439. The proposal uses vague and abstract terms that would expand elective abortions well into the second and third trimester. It also risks eliminating fifty years of widely supported and common-sense health and safety laws intended to protect women and babies from unsafe and coercive abortion practices. Initiative 439 creates a culture of abortion that is simply un-Nebraskan.

In contrast, Initiative 434 was launched by medical professionals to provide some baseline protections in the state constitution for unborn babies beginning in the second and third trimester. While imperfect in its protection for all babies, this proposal provides an important step forward in safeguarding Nebraska laws enacted to ensure the health and safety of women and babies. I am asking Catholics to vote FOR Initiative 434, especially as a defense against the morally problematic Initiative 439.

As early voting begins in the coming weeks, please take some time to learn more about why Initiative 439 would be bad for Nebraska. You can do so by visiting www.voteAGAINST439.com. I also call Catholics to take courageous action. Defeating Initiative 439 will take more than a Bishop's letter; it will take each and every one of us talking to family, friends, fellow parishioners and Nebraskans and urging them to also vote AGAINST Initiative 439.

As with all things, we rely on God's help and ask for the Blessed Mother's intercession for the protection of Nebraska's women and babies.

I am sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. +Joseph G. Hanefeldt
Bishop of Grand Island