

Policy Brief | Pro-Life Issues Titus for Texas

OVERVIEW

I am a pro-life candidate. For me this means much more than merely being anti-abortion. I believe to be consistent, any pro-life position must also address issues of healthcare, immigration, gun laws, poverty, the environment, and capital punishment. Increasingly, this is referred to as a “whole life” position, acknowledging the value and dignity in every human life from conception to death and advocating for each life to be treated with honor and respect. This is a more nuanced and difficult stance, but one I hold with conviction.

HEALTHCARE

Texas is home to more uninsured people than any other state in America. When the Affordable Care Act made it possible for states to expand Medicaid, the State of Texas elected not to do so. According to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), if Texas were to expand Medicaid, 1.5 million (non-elderly) adults would benefit. That is 30% of those presently uninsured. Unemployment is not the reason for the high rate of uninsured people. Three out of four adults without insurance live in a home with at least one worker. I believe Medicaid should be expanded in Texas.

This expansion would not close all the gaps, however. In the absence of statewide Medicaid expansion, individual counties were required to provide indigent healthcare services. However, there were no regulations placed on these counties and benefits vary across the state. While Harris County is one of the most generous, we still lack resources to meet the needs of our residents. In addition to expanding Medicare, I propose increasing funding to county health programs, with something akin to the Permanent University Fund providing resources to do so.

IMMIGRATION

My pro-life position is one that embraces inherent dignity and worth of every human life, not just the lives of those who are United States citizens. As such, policies around refugees and immigrants are central to this position.

I affirm the heart, thesis, and strategy of [The Immigrant Coalition](#). Their five-step solution is one that seeks to find the common ground of both parties around border security *and* pathways to the safe relocation of desperate people.

1. **Invest in resources** to eliminate the backlog of 700,000 visa applications.

2. **Increase foreign aid** from the United States to countries from which people are migrating.
3. To ensure human flourishing, **increase aid accountability** in nations to whom money is given.
4. Continue to **secure the border**.
5. **Implement detention alternatives** which are more dignifying than present practices.

ABORTION

As a pro-life candidate, I do not support abortion. However, I stand with [The And Campaign](#) when they assert that the “popular rhetoric that needlessly inflames and offends is unhelpful, as is rhetoric that rationalizes away our responsibility to act.” While abortion is permitted under the law, I support efforts to provide fewer and safer abortions and for any state’s right to legislate accordingly.

At the same time, we must recognize that abortion rates continue to decline. According to multiple studies, 2019 saw the fewest abortions in the United States in the last fifty years, with rates at less than half of their peak in 1980. This is a positive trend, and it is noteworthy that it occurred while abortion was legal. In addition to regulating abortion in Texas, we must continue to fund other programs and services including education and contraception, as well as recognizing the social and economic conditions that often contribute to the decision by those in under-resourced communities to terminate a pregnancy.

POVERTY

One in ten Texans is experiencing extreme poverty. Over a third of working Texas families are at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. 1 in 7 Texans experience food insecurity. That’s 1.4 million Texas households (or 4 million individuals plus). According to [Feeding Texas](#), that’s 20% of all children and more than 1 in 10 elderly Texans. If we’re going to say with a straight face that we’re pro-life, we must address issues of poverty in Texas.

I propose two steps to address this crisis. First, community college and trade school should be free for individuals whose families are at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. Second, Texas should raise the minimum wage to above the federal minimum of \$7.25/hour, a rate it has held since 2009. I believe Texas should aim to have a minimum wage of \$15/hour by 2030.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The science is clear — there is no greater existential threat to our health and well-being as human beings than the unhealth of our environment. As such, you cannot parse out

environmental issues from pro-life issues. In order to sustain and promote human flourishing, we must address the challenges we face.

Arguments over whether or not climate change is cyclical or permanent are arguments I find unhelpful. Even if cyclical, it does not excuse us from right action because the livelihoods of ourselves and our descendants depend upon our attentiveness.

While oil refineries get most of the attention, coal-fired power plants cause most of the air pollution in Texas. I agree with [Environment Texas](#) that we should pursue diversification in energy provision with cleaner options and hold polluters accountable for breaking the law. Texas will always be an oil-producing capital, but we do well to provide ourselves with options. We would do our planet even better.

GUNS

[Texas Gun Sense](#) provides meaningful data to frame the debate around gun violence and legislation. Common sense, evidence-based policies are called for. Despite several high-profile mass shootings, the 86th Texas Legislature actually made access to guns easier.

While extreme positions call for the removal of all weapons from the population while others believe the 2nd Amendment provides unrestricted access to firearms to all, most Texans are for a more balanced approach. I am for gun owners' rights but universal background checks, regulations at gun shows, and restrictions on some weapons and ammunition should be considered.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Believing that every life is valuable and understanding that any pro-life position affirms this thesis, I am against the death penalty. Texas has executed more prisoners than any state since 1976, with about five times more executions than the second place state. According to the [Death Penalty Information Center](#), states with more executions generally also have more homicides, proving the capital-punishment-as-deterrent argument fallacious.

Capital punishment is also financially burdensome. The average death penalty case in Texas costs \$2.3 million, or about three times what it would cost to imprison an individual for forty years.