

April 4, 2023

Mayor Rusty Hike

City Council Members:

Thomas Burns

Rich Casey

Paul Cook

Kathy Welch

Don Preister

Jerry McCaw

Jim Ristow, City Administrator

Aimee Bataillon, City Attorney

Susan Kluthe, City Clerk

RE: City Initiative & Referendum Petition

Dear Mayor and Bellevue City Council Members:

The effort to see an ordinance be brought before our Mayor and City Council, through a citizen initiative petition, has fallen short of the required number of signatures.

While we did fall short of the required number of signatures for our petition, one has to ask why our petition fell short. Did our petition fall short because there are not enough people in Bellevue who want to see abortion outlawed, or did our petition fall short because Bellevue residents are afraid of their names, addresses and signatures being on a petition which could be accessed by anyone through an open records request?

When people are threatened with being shot in a neighborhood, a church, and a school, it impacts their political involvement. I was physically threatened on March 10<sup>th</sup> when a woman drove her car at a high rate of speed at me on the sidewalk with her vehicle. I hope and pray that the City of Bellevue does not let Jane's Revenge have this victory. I hope that the City of Bellevue will settle this once and for all and put this ordinance forward for a public election – apart from the initiative process.

The citizen initiative petition was not the only option for this ordinance to be considered by this City Council. If this City Council so chooses, it could still decide to place this ordinance for consideration on a future agenda. Or, the City Council could decide to send this ordinance to the voters at a future election - despite the lack of the required number of signatures. If the City

Council decided to send this ordinance to the ballot, on their own, it would not be the first in Nebraska to do so. In August of last year, the Village Board of Paxton, Nebraska voted 4-0 to pass a resolution to send an ordinance outlawing abortion to the November ballot.

According to an article from Live Action News, "The action came after a resident of the village collected over 138 unofficial signatures expressing interest in the community. Instead of requiring the resident to re-collect signatures on an official citizen initiative petition, the Village Board decided to voluntarily place the proposed Paxton Ordinance Outlawing Abortion on the November 8th, 2022 ballot for the voters of Paxton to decide."

City Council of Bellevue, during this citizen initiative we suffered intimidation and death threats, which cost our initiative substantially. There are citizens of this community who are with us on this petition, but they were afraid to sign due to the threats of violence to themselves, their families, their churches, and their schools. I am asking you, Mayor and City Council, will you please place on your agenda the consideration of an action to send an ordinance to a future ballot – so that we can settle once and for all where the City of Bellevue truly stands on abortion in this city.

Mayor and City Council, please don't let terrorist groups like Jane's Revenge win in their attempts to defeat this initiative. Please give this ordinance a chance in order that the people of this city can truly weigh in on this matter in a way which does not put the lives of themselves and their families at risk.

We are not giving up on the children in the womb, this issue of their very lives, and we intend to pursue this matter through our Mayor and City Council until action is taken.

Sincerely,



Judith Mansisidor