



Vol. 21, No. 2

a publication of

**Life Matters**  
WORLDWIDE

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## Sanctuary cities protect the unborn

In recent years, the term “sanctuary city” has been adopted by American towns as a means of resisting federal laws on immigration or state laws regulating guns. In a similar way, pro-life citizens have acted to make their cities safe for unborn babies. They want to protect them from abortion at every stage of pregnancy, beyond what state or federal laws are doing.

This pro-life movement has grown steadily since June of 2018 when the board of Effingham County, Illinois, resolved it would become a “Sanctuary for the Life of Unborn Human Beings.”

Another early adopter was Roswell, New Mexico, whose town council decided in early 2019 it would protect innocent human life. A statewide bill at that time was aiming to keep abortion legal should *Roe v. Wade* be overturned. That bill failed in the state legislature, but Roswell went ahead with their resolution to prefer life over death, affirm adoption, and protect medical professionals who conscientiously object to participating in abortions.

According to the website [\[TheUnborn.com\]\(http://TheUnborn.com\), at least 30 cities now call themselves sanctuaries for the unborn. Many are located in Texas and most are very small towns with no abortion clinics. Many of these abortion-free zones are largely symbolic, although physicians’ offices are also prevented from prescribing abortion pills.](http://SanctuaryCitiesFor-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

One major city—Lubbock, Texas—had been home to a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic until a popular vote made it a sanctuary city in May of 2021. That clinic cannot now do abortions.

### Save babies by helping women

Because most sanctuary cities for the unborn are tiny, they don’t have pregnancy care centers either, but they can help women avoid abortion—by creating a culture of life, promoting abortion alternatives, and helping women find nearby PCCs. They can support area centers financially and serve as volunteers or board members. They can welcome struggling women and families to their churches.

A brief survey of thirty cities on the Sanctuary Cities for the Unborn website finds that twenty are within 25 miles of at least one PCC. The farthest distance a woman must travel from a sanctuary city to a PCC is 40 miles.

In contrast, abortion clinics in the region are few and far between. For example, while there are four pregnancy care centers within 50 miles of Joaquin, Texas, the nearest abortion clinic is 49 miles away in Shreveport, Louisiana. Most abortion clinics in Texas are 100 or more miles from a sanctuary city. Therefore, pro-life people have many opportunities for helping women and making abortion unthinkable.

The city of Riverton, Utah, is a good example of a sanctuary city that looks out for the needs of women who might consider abortion. Riverton’s resolution is a strong statement against abortion and also expresses support for women during their pregnancies. It endorses organizations that help women obtain health care, promote sexual abstinence for unmarried people, teach parenting and adoption, offer childcare and other assistance to single parents, and protect pregnant mothers from discrimination in schools and workplaces.

**S**anctuary cities are another way Christians can fight abortion at the local level. As more cities become sanctuaries for the unborn, more moms and families will know we care.



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