



# The Kansas Coalition for Life

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## ProLife Groups Ask for Zoning Change

By Mark S. Gietzen

Tomorrow, representatives from **Kansans for Life**, **Operation Rescue**, **Word of Life Church**, and the **Kansas Coalition for Life** will ask the Wichita City Council to rezone the neighborhood at Kellogg and Bleckley Streets, to exclude abortion procedures from occurring in that neighborhood.

By law, the Wichita City Council does NOT have the authority to make a blanket statement saying that there will be no abortions in Wichita; however, the Wichita City Council DOES have the legal authority to zone abortions out of a residential neighborhood.

Some of the reasons being cited for this request are:

1. It is common for emotionally charged and grieving family members and / or boyfriends of abortion clients to be present at an abortion facility. Some of these people are armed, and it is unsafe for residential homes to continuously be in the line of fire.
2. Abortionist Tiller was shot while driving on Bleckley Street, by Shelly Shannon, an out-of-state mentally unstable person who had no connection whatsoever to any Kansas proLife group. Not all of her wild shots hit Tiller or his vehicle, and it was only luck that others were not hurt.
3. During the last five years of operation of the Tiller Abortion Facility at the same location as the current South Wind Abortion Facility, 18 incidents involving guns occurred. That is more than three gun incidents per year! With the new conceal carry laws enacted since the closure of the Tiller Abortion Facility, the number of armed people present on-site will likely be higher, not lower.
4. In the past, Tiller's security company, Diamond Security, was willing to communicate openly with proLife and proChoice leaders to avoid potential tense situations, and repeatedly worked to defuse violence before it occurred. Today, South Wind's new security company, **Steve Watson Security**, refuses to give proLife leaders his contact information, or to communicate with them in any way that would enable us to help defuse tense situations, as was done so many times in the past.
5. In the past, Tiller did not allow his so-called "escorts" to interact with the proLife volunteers on-site. Now, South Wind escorts antagonize and provocatively taunt the proLife volunteers on site, in ways that make

serious violence more likely. The Wichita Police have been called many times since South Wind opened, but they do not have the man-power to keep a referee on site continuously to deal with South Wind escorts, nor should they have to.

6. Aside from the direct threat of gun violence, it is inappropriate to have neighborhood children, including school busses loaded with school kids, exposed to protests and graphic signs associated with a facility offering abortion.
7. It is inappropriate to have neighborhood residents endure a disruption of normal life, due to traffic problems and street closures related to an abortion facility.
  - a. Numerous calls to police – sometimes responding with 10 or 20 patrol cars.
  - b. Police Blockades – separating proChoice and proLife activists, resulting in complete closures of Bleckley Street, and an unavoidable interruption to normal life in the entire neighborhood.
  - c. Complete residential street closures create problems with Ambulance Traffic and additional safety concerns, not only for abortion clients, but for all residents.
  - d. Parking for large ProLife or ProChoice events clog up the residential areas.
  - e. Out of town abortion protesters knocking on residential doors,

asking to use their restroom facilities is not a good situation.

- f. Out of town abortion protesters sleeping on City easement, but directly in front of residential homes is not a situation that should be promoted by city leaders.
- g. Large out of Town crowds and the lack of public facilities in the area makes normal life in the neighborhood impossible.

The dangers and complications of having an abortion facility and residential homes in the same immediate area are numerous and can be avoided by a simple, common sense zoning change.

**Kansans for Life** has already turned in over 14,000 petitions from citizens asking for the zoning change.

With four-of-the-seven City Council Members having self-identified as “*proLife candidates*”, Vice-Mayor **Pete Meitzner**, and Councilmen **James Clendenin, Jeff Longwell & Jeff Blubaugh**, each having received help in their election campaigns from local proLife groups, there is no reason why this request would not be considered very seriously.

Failure to manage the Wichita Zoning Rules in a way that protects Wichita residents would be irresponsible of this City Council, regardless of the individual member’s position on the abortion issue.

We remain hopeful that the Wichita City Council will do the right thing.

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