As Black faith and community leaders across Ohio who are called to care for God’s people, we urge our fellow Christians, the Black community, and all Ohioans who believe in the inherent value of every person to vote NO on Issue 1 this November. The future of our state, our society, and our race is at stake in this amendment, and we must protect them.

This is not a party line vote, nor is Issue 1 a Republican or Democrat issue. This is a moral issue and for the Black community in particular, it is a life-or-death matter. Only 13 percent of Ohio’s population is Black, yet 48 percent of abortions undergone by residents of our state are performed on Black women – a tragic and difficult reality that our community cannot ignore. Even more alarming is the number of Black children – 20 million – who were killed in the womb between 1973 and the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the U.S. Supreme Court last June. That is enough to fill Ohio stadium more than 194 times.

The Black community has been the target of the abortion industry for decades, beginning with the deplorable ideology of racist eugenicist Margaret Sanger, whose Planned Parenthood organization purposefully established abortion mills in minority neighborhoods and targeted our communities for abortions. Sanger’s mission was to kill Black babies before they entered the world, and Planned Parenthood and the for-profit abortion industry have allowed that mission to continue to this very day.

We can only hope the abortion industry will one day be held to account for its dark history and depraved legacy, but in the meantime, we cannot allow it to continue pushing an agenda driven by racism and greed.

Unfortunately, Issue 1 does just that. It is more extreme than Roe v. Wade, and it will allow for painful, late-term abortions through all nine months of pregnancy – even after an unborn baby can feel pain. It will permit our children to undergo abortions without parents knowing. And it will continue to rob generations of Black women and men of the insurmountable joy of parenthood.

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Enough is enough. The Black community supports life. We have a rich pro-life history, rooted in our love of family and in our abiding faith and belief that God is the ultimate author of every life. As Psalm 139:13-14 declares, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

Further, as faith leaders, we express our concern for and commitment to life beyond the womb, and seek to make real the promises of God for every human being.

Our faith sustains us every day, and it must now spur us on to defeat this amendment and save countless Black lives in doing so. Together, we must send a message to the abortion industry by stopping Issue 1. We must end the targeting of Black babies and instead promote a culture of life.

We will make our voices heard, and together we will vote no on Issue 1.

Pastor Daryl Baker, Destiny Ministries
Pastor Terry Banks, Hope City House of Prayer
Honorable J. Kenneth Blackwell, Former Cincinnati Mayor, Ohio SOS and Ohio Treasurer
Minister Norman Brantly, Eagle Rock Church
Bishop Charles Brown, United Fellowship of Churches
Pastor Ricky Brown, World Fire Church
Pastor Michael Bullock, Mile's Mission
Pastor Rick Burkes, Only Believe Church Dayton
Pastor Jerome Byrd, Good News Baptist Church
Dr. Marlene Carson, Black Leaders Against Sex Trafficking (B.L.A.S.T.)
Pastor Michael Carter, The Well Church
Pastor Teddy Ceasar, Destiny Church Int.l
Bishop Timothy J. Clarke, First Church of God
Pastor Frederick Clement, One Family Church
Pastor John Coats, Metropolitan Church of God In Christ
Pastor Leon Collins, Dayton-Eastview COG
Minister David Crowder, Faith Life Church
Deacon Raymond Crump, Freemont Baptist Temple
Apostle Arnold Culbreath, Douglas Leadership Institute
Pastor Lance Darden, Fresh Wind Worship Center
Pastor Charlie Davis, New Born Ministries
Pastor Arthur M. Davis II, Mt. Nebo Baptist Church
Bishop Harry Davis, Greater St. Paul Church
Pastor Gabriel Day, Last Trump Productions
Pastor Gerome Decarlo, Glory Evangelistic Ministries Church
Pastor James Delaney, St. James Christian Center
Pastor Kenneth Donaldson, Rising Star Baptist Church
Pastor Joe Dunlap, Bethel Temple
Evangelist Christina Dunlap, Bethel Temple
Pastor Judah Early, New Community Bible Fellowship
Minister Ruth Edmonds, Columbus Christian Center
Pastor Yaves Ellis, New Birth Christian Ministries
Pastor David C. Forbes, Jr., Columbus Christian Center
Dr. Tracy Forbes, Columbus Christian Center
Pastor Gary Frost, Steel Valley Baptist Association
Pastor Bobbie Garrett, Cornerstone Baptist Church
Mr. H. Goode, Goode Solutions Inc.
Pastor Taelor Gray, Linden Life Fellowship
Pastor David Gray, Signing as Individual
Pastor Karlie Hale, One Love Church
Pastor Reggie Hayes, United Faith Int.l Baptist Church & S.C.B.O.
Pastor Jeff Haygood, Living Word Church of Columbus
Minister Matthew Hazelwood, Faith Life
Minister LaJuana Henderson, The Wave of Praise Digital Radio Station
Pastor Toriano Henry, Evergrowing Ministries
Pastor Rodney Jackson, President, African American Fellowship of S.C.B.O.
Pastor Taylor James, New Community Bible Fellowship
Bishop John Jennings, Kingdom Authority Ministries Int'l
Overseer Tina Jennings, Kingdom Authority Ministries Int'l
Pastor Brandon Johnson, Rock Columbus
Minister Kelven Johnson, Community U.C.A.N.
Pastor David Judah, Vintage Grounds Worldwide
Pastor Lonnie Kee, Strongpoint Church
Pastor Curtis Kemp, Good Life Church
Mrs. Bernadine Kennedy Kent, Former State Representative
Pastor John Little, Resurrection Baptist Church
Pastor Julius Lancaster, All Nations Worship Assembly
Minister Jeanne Madison, Signing as Individual
Minister David Mahan, Eagle Rock Church
Elder Sean Marshall, The PAW Patrol Ministries
Minister Angela Marshall, The PAW Patrol Ministries
Pastor Brondon, Mathis Hope for Columbus & the Nations Movement
Pastor John Maze, Agape Bible Fellowship
Pastor Byron McGee, Cornerstone Baptist Church
Apostle Arthur McGuire, Joshua Christian Ministries
Lady Charlotte McGuire, Joshua Christian Ministries
Pastor Carl Mitchell, Restore Church the Bible Way
Pastor Eugene Moore, Guiding Light Church
Pastor Wayne Moore, Greater Christ Temple
Pastor Walter Moss, The Father's House
Lady Darleen Moss, The Father's House
Minister Mare' Munala, Eagle Rock Church
Pastor Gerald Murphy, Garden City Church
Pastor Stephen Opoku, Hope of Glory Temple
Pastor Elgin Orton, City of Zion Church
Pastor Stephen Owens, Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
Mrs. Yvonne Pardon, Signed as individual
Pastor Claudio Penha, Harmony Church
Pastor Eb Penha, Rock Columbus
Minister Al Phillips, Signed as individual
Deacon James Ragland, Signed as individual
Pastor William Randolph, Pastors Legacy Ministries
Bishop Harold Rayford, The Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith
Pastor Charles Redmond, New Journey Church
Senator Michelle Reynolds, Ohio General Assembly
Mr. Mo Riggins, Educator and Community Advocate
Pastor Gerald Saffo, United Faith Community Church
Pastor Antone Sampson, The Freedom Center Church
Lady Erika Sampson, The Freedom Center Church
Bishop Leslie J. Simms, Living Waters Christian Fellowship
Minister Sean Smith, Roar Ministries
Pastor Michael Spears, Fishery Ministries
Pastor Collin Stables, The Joy Walker Ministries
Pastor Debbie Stables, The Joy Walker Ministries
Pastor Ivan Stewart, Kingdom Modela Church
Pastor Geoff Stewart, Kingdom Models
Pastor Alfred Tagoe, Oasis of Love Community Church
Pastor Rory Tate, Center of Hope Bible Fellowship Church
Pastor Lynne Themalaras, Oasis City Church
Dr. John Tyus, World Conquerors Through Jesus Christ ministries
Pastor Gavin Walker, Calvary Christian Fellowship
Pastor Andre Whaley, Emmanuel Temple Apostolic Church
Apostle Brian Williams, Hope City House of Prayer
Pastor Gerald Williams, Yeshua is Lord
Pastor Shatisha Williams, Zion Christian Fellowship
Pastor Derek Williams, Zion Christian Fellowship
State Representative Josh Williams, Ohio General Assembly
Mr. James A. Whitaker Jr., State Central Committee
Apostle Juan Woods, Triumphant Christian Center
Pastor Mike Young, City of Grace