

# CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

IN GOOD CONSCIENCE

The Honorable Arturo Sarukhan  
Ambassador of Mexico to the United States  
Embassy of Mexico  
1911 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20006

September 30, 2008

Honorable Ambassador Sarukhan,

Catholics for Choice is an organization that shapes and advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice and respect for the capacity of women to make moral decisions about their lives. Standing alongside the women's movement in Latin America, we congratulate Mexico and the Ministers of the National Supreme Court on the landmark decision of August 28 affirming the constitutionality of the Mexico City Law decriminalizing abortion until the twelfth week of gestation. As you know, the case was a hearing on the law passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District on April 24, 2007.

This decision—endorsed by the overwhelming majority of ministers—enhances the status of women's human rights in the Mexican Constitution. An institution at this level has never before acted so decisively in such a case, given that the decision clearly establishes full constitutional protection for a woman's right to choose abortion in early pregnancy.

Another crucial component of this decision is the recognition of the lay state and the democratic principles of the Mexican State. We wholeheartedly commend the actions of the ministers, who, in accordance with their commitment to public service, decided to place legal arguments above pressure from fundamentalists and threats from the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic church.

For us, citizens of other countries and strong supporters of our sister organizations and partners in Latin America, this resolution has great significance: it raises hopes of further reform in the region. Though we are aware that these issues must be decided on a case-by-case basis—nationally or locally—the legal decision affirms that governments are not obligated to penalize women who decide to terminate their pregnancies.

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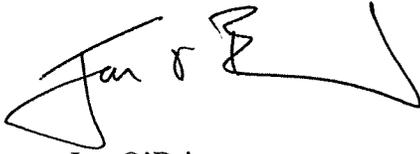
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We would like to see all governments in the region, including other Mexican states, reconsider any laws that restrict the rights of their citizens to free reproductive choices. Both the court's decision and the arguments put forth by the ministers may be used as a model for the full protection of women's human and reproductive rights throughout Mexico and the rest of Latin America.

Finally, in applauding this significant legislative achievement in your country, we encourage governments in other countries to respect the lay state and to commit to guaranteeing sexual and reproductive rights for all citizens while also providing the necessary resources for women to obtain services for legal and safe abortions.

Respectfully,



Jon O'Brien  
President  
Catholics for Choice



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