

Loosening abortion laws in Mexico City

MEXICO CITY - Catholics and civic organizations have launched a campaign against a Mexico City proposal to legalize abortion during the first three months of pregnancy.

The proposal “has awoken the conscience of civil society in this city,” said Armando Martinez, president of the College of Catholic Lawyers in Mexico City, at a March 18 press conference after Mass in Mexico City’s Metropolitan Cathedral.

Martinez said the proposal would violate the Mexican Constitution, and he pledged to file a challenge before the nation’s highest court if it is approved.

Abortion in Mexico is currently permitted only in cases of rape; however, in Mexico City, it is also allowed if the mother’s life is in danger. Lawmakers said they will discuss the bill in coming weeks. But it is expected to be approved with the support of the city’s majority, left-leaning Democratic Revolution Party.

Martinez said the Mexican College of Catholic Lawyers has united with other civic organizations to form the “We Are Life” coalition, which has been organizing a protest for March 22 in front of the city assembly. The coalition also has been planning to lead a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe March 25 to pray for the bill’s defeat.

Martinez’s announcement follows numerous statements from the Catholic Church criticizing the bill. The Mexican bishop’s conference has called on the city assembly to “reaffirm its respect for life.” The Mexico City Archdiocese said in a statement that city legislators are drafting laws “that go against human dignity.”

The nation’s ruling National Action Party has opposed the bill; one of its top officials has called it a “murderous law.”

However, Victor Hugo Cirigo, head of the Democratic Revolution Party in the assembly, has vowed to push the bill through, telling the press that “no church or

religion will impose its will on the city.”

Three smaller left-leaning parties also support the initiative.