

# Laredo protest against newborn circumcision draws mixed reactions



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Published: Dec. 12, 2024 at 6:03 PM CST |



LAREDO, Tex. (KGNS) - A topic not often discussed took center stage at a busy intersection in North Laredo as members of the organization *The Bloodstained Men* gathered to protest newborn circumcision. Decked out in all white, the group likened the procedure to mutilation.

In the middle of a bustling intersection, just a short distance from a middle school, *The Bloodstained Men* took a stand against what they deem “child mutilation.” Their protest drew a variety of responses from the Laredo community.

David Atkinson, CEO of *The Bloodstained Men*, explained their stance: “American doctors are destroying a body part that they do not understand. The foreskin is a normal, healthy, valuable body part.” Atkinson continued, calling circumcision a “serious human rights violation.” He said the group has seen growing support over the years. “We’re seeing a lot more support. The people who were too timid to show support years ago now honk [their horn], and they give us a thumbs up.”

However, not everyone agrees with their message. Samuel De Los Santos, a resident, voiced a different view, stating, “I think it’s a decision parents should take.” De Los Santos came across the protest from miles away, after spotting a billboard calling the procedure “cruel and harmful.” While he acknowledged that circumcision may not be medically necessary, he believed it is a “hygiene issue.” De Los Santos ultimately believes that all men should undergo the procedure.

David Wilson, a member of *The Bloodstained Men*, has been advocating against circumcision for over two decades. He criticized the procedure’s supposed benefits, suggesting, “Only if you’re lazy, if you don’t want to get in the shower or the tub and clean yourself, then by all means, cut off your fingernails. You know, your sex organs, while you’re at it, get a colostomy bag.”

Despite these claims, the American Academy of Pediatrics affirms that the health benefits of circumcision outweigh the risks. These benefits include reducing the risk of sexually transmitted infections, urinary tract infections, and making hygiene easier.

The issue of consent is central to the debate, with cultural factors playing a significant role in shaping opinions. De Los Santos and others in the community continue to support circumcision as a personal choice, while *The Bloodstained Men* view it as an infringement on bodily autonomy.

Data from the National Center for Health Statistics shows a decline in circumcision rates over the years, with only 58% of newborns undergoing the procedure between 1979 and 2010, a 10% drop over 32 years.

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