



Testimony of Taylor Morton, Kansas Lobbyist and Policy Analyst (written and oral testimony)
Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes
Regarding HB 2789 (Opponent)
House Committee on Health and Human Services
February 16, 2024

Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes (“PPGPV”) is the political and advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood Great Plains (“PPGP”). PPGP offers expert, compassionate sexual and reproductive health care to patients with three health center locations in Kansas. PPGPV submits this testimony in opposition to House Bill 2789. HB 2789 would establish the “Pregnancy Compassion Program,” which would be administered by the Department of Children and Families (“DCF”) to “provide resources and promote childbirth to women facing unplanned pregnancies.” Under the Pregnancy Compassion Program, the state treasurer would contract with one non-profit organization which would subcontract with anti-abortion organizations to provide vaguely outlined services such as “counseling and mentoring” and “providing educational materials and information about pregnancy and parenting.” HB 2789 would also establish the “Pregnancy Compassion Public Awareness Program” to “promote public awareness of available resources” and would be administered by the same non-profit organization contracted with the treasurer. The program would allow the non-profit to use taxpayer money to create and promote a website with an index of the anti-abortion organizations and to directly promote these organizations through state-funded TV, radio, print media, and internet advertisements.

HB 2789 would appropriate \$4 million per year from the state general fund toward these programs, despite setting forth no minimum standards or oversight to ensure public funds are being appropriately utilized. Unlike other state-funded health programs, there is nothing in HB 2789 that would require recipient organization to track and report how funds are spent. Nor will these organizations have to ensure and report outcome-based results. This bill does not require the collection of data or metrics to measure whether taxpayer dollars are being used to provide tangible benefits to Kansans. There are no standard criteria an organization would have to meet to be eligible—only that an organization must be one which does not perform abortion or induce of referral for abortion.

Similar programs in other states have been the subject of extensive critique on the grounds that they elude financial accountability and misuse taxpayer funds. It has been reported that most of the state money allocated to these programs go towards operational costs, overhead, marketing, and religious anti-abortion counseling sessions—rather than going towards legitimate, comprehensive services that support pregnant people. Multiple investigations have found the lack of oversight into such state-funded programs creates an environment in which funds can easily be diverted. For example, an anti-abortion crisis pregnancy center (CPC) in San Antonio, Texas, reportedly spent tens of thousands of state dollars on travel to Miami and Las Vegas, limousines, a motorcycle, a smoke shop, and to buy land for an industrial hemp farm.¹ In North Carolina, federal funds were used to illegally purchase \$50,000 worth of religious propaganda over a five-year period.² In Pennsylvania, the Auditor General conducted an investigation into an anti-abortion organization and concluded that the organization had used taxpayer dollars for the purpose of promoting their own development by increasing executive salaries and funding

¹ <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2021/12/21/nonprofit-for-pregnant-women-young-parents-used-funds-on-smoke-shop-and-to-buy-land-for-hemp-production-records-show/>

² <https://campaignforaccountability.org/campaign-for-accountability-calls-on-north-carolina-to-terminate-contract-with-anti-abortion-clinic-human-coalition/>



the organization’s activities in states outside of North Carolina.³ The complete lack of minimum standards or oversight in HB 2789 paves the way for the misuse of Kansas taxpayer dollars under the guise of supporting pregnant people.

Furthermore, HB 2789 would directly siphon funds from critical safety net programs and give that money to organizations that knowingly spread false, misleading information and provide no legitimate medical services. From 2006 to 2021, Texas has diverted \$45 million in federal funds from TANF to the “Alternatives to Abortion” Program, with no meaningful evidence of benefits to its citizens.⁴ This bill would require DCF to match money with federal and other public and private funding in coordination with the state treasurer. DCF would have to divert federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds away from low-income families and instead use taxpayer dollars to fund anti-abortion CPCs. This money is intended to provide direct support to our state’s most vulnerable families through direct assistance to pay for necessities like food, rent, and childcare. Instead of providing meaningful support to low-income Kansas families, HB 2789 would give this money to CPCs to spend as they please, as long as they intend to prevent abortions.

CPCs provide limited—if any—health care services and rely on misinformation to pressure and scare pregnant people to prevent them from seeking abortion care.⁵ CPCs provide inaccurate, misleading, and deceptive information to pregnant people, which can delay or interfere with access to abortion, prenatal care, or contraception.⁶ As found in multiple undercover investigations, CPCs advertise themselves as legitimate medical clinics, but they are unregulated and unlicensed by the state.⁷ Volunteers—who are non-medical personnel—often wear white coats and see visitors in exam rooms, which further deceives visitors into thinking they are patients receiving legitimate medical services.⁸

Additionally, CPCs have been found to disproportionately target people of color and low-income pregnant people.⁹ CPCs contribute to racism and exacerbate socioeconomic inequity by impeding access to essential health care.¹⁰ There are no requirements set forth in HB 2789 to ensure that counseling, mentoring, and educational materials provided by these CPCs are medically accurate or factual. There is no requirement that recipient organizations demonstrate a tangible benefit for their use of taxpayer funds, nor is there any auditing protocol set forth to ensure compliance.

HB 2789 would create a statewide public funding and advertising program for explicitly anti-abortion organizations. Rather than utilizing crucial funding for its intended purpose of supporting low-income and marginalized individuals, this bill would divert such funding to anti-abortion organizations that target those same vulnerable Kansans. And with little to no oversight on how the funds are used, as evidenced in other states, Kansans’ taxpayer dollars could very well be used to fund executive salaries, expensive vacations, and out-of-state development costs, with no meaningful government oversight. PPGPV strongly and respectfully urges the Committee to vote against HB 2789.

³ https://www.paauditor.gov/Media/Default/Reports/DHS_RA_Audit%20Report.pdf

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/supreme-court/texas-state-funded-crisis-pregnancy-centers-gave-medical-misinformation-rcna34883>

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9189146/>

⁶ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2014.07.003>

⁷ *Id*

⁸ *Id*

⁹ <https://swwomenlaw.org/in-the-news-crisis-pregnancy-centers-endanger-womens-health-with-taxpayer-dollars-and-without-oversight/>

¹⁰ <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/why-crisis-pregnancy-centers-are-legal-unethical/2018-03>