



Laurel Burchfield
Advocacy Director
contact@mainstream.vote

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House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rep. Brenda Landwehr, Chair

Opponent Testimony, Written

HB2789– Establishing the pregnancy compassion program

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB2789.

Mainstream OPPOSES HB2789. This proposal is an attempt to undermine a person's right to safely access reproductive health care and instead diverts Kansas General Fund and public tax dollars from needed services to private, often faith-based anti-abortion centers. This is a violation of both our state constitutional right to a safe and legal abortion and our First Amendment right to religious freedom.

A similar effort to fund pregnancy centers during the 2023 appropriations process was vetoed by Governor Kelly. SB2789 is almost identical to last year's failed attempt to divert \$2 million tax-payer dollars into a program led by a single, unnamed nonprofit. Instead of acknowledging that this proposal is wrong for Kansans, the Kansas Legislature has doubled down and requested \$4 million public tax dollars, as well as an unknown amount from the sale of Choose Life and In God We Trust license plates.

The facilities that would financially benefit from this \$4 million investment into anti-abortion clinics are often not legitimate healthcare centers, and instead are unregulated centers with numerous cited unethical practices¹. Instead of providing the medical care for pregnant women in need of services, they proselytize, coerce, and scare people to carry pregnancies to term and share unproven medical advice regarding disinformation like abortion reversal².

¹ *The Alliance CPC Study: Full Findings & Study Methods*. The Alliance. (n.d.).
https://alliancestateadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/107/Alliance_CPC_Report_FullFindings11-1.pdf

² *Medication abortion reversal is not supported by science*. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (n.d.).
<https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science>

SB2789 would establish the so-called pregnancy compassion program, but is far from providing the truly compassionate, life-saving care that so many pregnant Kansans need. Instead, this proposal diverts \$4 million dollars into programming – including a public awareness campaign – that benefit the type of pregnancy centers known to provide unproven medical information and coercive counseling with mandated faith-based courses³. This money should instead be invested in medical care centers that provide resources and support for all pregnant Kansans, regardless of their pregnancy outcome. True compassion for pregnant people is found in comprehensive medical care that is evidence-based and scientifically accurate. True compassion for families with young children would invest in existing and evidence-based systems that lift children out of poverty and don't end once the child is 2 years old.

Kansas voters have already spoken. We support the constitutional right to reproductive health care, and it is our position that right this does not include public dollars diverted to unethical, anti-abortion clinics with coercive tactics and disinformation that imposes one religious ideology onto pregnant Kansans seeking support and resources. Government has no place in religion, and religion has no place in government.

For these reasons, Mainstream opposes HB2789. We urge you to reject this proposal that would negatively impact Kansans' access to healthcare and violate the separation of religion and government – a core tenet of our democracy and cornerstone of religious freedom.

Thank you,

Laurel Burchfield
Mainstream

³ *Kansas Anti-Abortion Center Funding*. Equity Forward. (n.d.).
https://equityfwd.org/sites/default/files/kansas_equity_forward_anti-abortion_center_funding_fact_sheet_v3.pdf