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Funding Pregnancy Help Centers is a Win-Win for Citizens, Clients, and Communities

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In most communities across the United States, women facing an unintended pregnancy have two basic options for specialized assistance: a local Planned Parenthood or a local Pregnancy Help Center (PHC). PHCs include pregnancy resource centers, adoption agencies, maternity homes, and social service organizations that offer help to needy pregnant women and infants while providing options other than abortion. Planned Parenthoods provide primarily contraception and abortion.

The primary difference between Planned Parenthoods and PHCs is that, while Planned Parenthood is the nation’s largest abortion provider, PHCs seek to help women and children escape the disastrous consequences of abortion, including the numerous documented risks of physical, emotional, and mental harm that follow abortion.

Planned Parenthood is a large recipient of government funding. In fact until August 19, Planned Parenthood received approximately $60 million in annual federal Title X funding—money that was to provide low-income women with preventative health care services. Planned Parenthood is also a frequent recipient of other sources of government funding, including state Sexual Risk Avoidance grants, state and federal Personal Responsibility Education Program grants, federal Teen Pregnancy Prevention grants, and Medicaid payments. More than one-third of Planned Parenthood’s revenue is derived from government funding, equating to over half a billion dollars ($563.8 million) annually. Conversely, PHCs receive little federal funding, and only 14 states actively fund PHCs. Heartbeat International, an affiliation organization for PHCs, reports that, “90% of their affiliates’ funding comes from [non-governmental] donations from local communities.”

In the past few months, new questions have emerged over government funding of Planned Parenthood as well as PHCs. In response to the decisions by two Circuit Courts of Appeals to lift stays and allow the Protect Life Rule of Title X to go into effect, at least four states (Massachusetts, Illinois, New Jersey, and Nevada) are considering offering state funding to Planned Parenthoods. At the same time, Ohio has increased its funding of PHCs, Missouri has increased its tax credit for donors to PHCs, and Arizona unsuccessfully attempted to pass a bill which would have funded PHCs.

Accordingly, the American taxpayer must now ask whether she wishes to see her money fund organizations that promote and profit from destructive, life-ending procedures (primarily Planned Parenthood); or whether she wishes to direct her tax dollars to organizations which seek to provide women the support and care they need to make a decision for childbirth (primarily PHCs). To answer this question, she should consider several facts outlined below.

First, states are allowed to prefer childbirth to abortion. This fact is well established by the United States Supreme Court. As the court stated in Roe v. Wade, “[T]he State...has

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legitimate interests in protecting...the potentiality of human life...” Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113, at 162. Additionally, the court found that “Congress has established incentives that make childbirth a more attractive alternative than abortion for persons eligible for Medicaid. These incentives bear a direct relationship to the legitimate congressional interest in protecting potential life.” Harris v. McRae, 448 U.S. 297, at 325 (1980) (emphasis added).

This is important because, while abortion-on-demand is the law of the land, states are not forced to fund procedures that many Americans oppose. A recent study\(^3\) indicated that six (6) in ten (10) Americans oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. Furthermore, the latest Gallup polling\(^4\) indicates 72% of Americans support legislation limiting abortion, with 60% believing it should be illegal in all or almost all circumstances.

As revealed by this poll, America is becoming more pro-life and less supportive of the abortion industry. Even the radical pro-abortion movement is acknowledging the fact that abortion is a life-ending procedure. Several abortion advocates have admitted\(^5\) that “abortion involves the termination of an early form of human life.”

No longer is abortion a “safe, legal, and rare” procedure, and with its vast private and public funding, Planned Parenthood increases abortions in the United States, in stark contrast with the desires of the American public. Planned Parenthood, substantially subsidized by taxpayer dollars, has an impressive and growing share of the U.S. abortion market. While the rate of abortion in the United States has steadily declined for the past 30 years, abortions performed by Planned Parenthood have increased dramatically. Since 1995, Planned Parenthood abortions increased by an astonishing 142%, as one study\(^7\) indicates. Supplying the abortion industry with taxpayer funds leads to the undesirable consequence of bankrolling the industry’s entire operations. In fact, Planned Parenthood’s use of government funding has inflated the U.S. abortion rate by more than three million avoidable abortions.

**Second, PHCs save taxpayer dollars.** In 2017, PHCs, nationally, saved their communities at least $161,008,203\(^8\) by subsidizing health care and other services at no cost to

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An organization serving as the manager for one state’s PHC funding program reported\textsuperscript{9} contributing a total of $44 million in tax savings in 2018, while receiving only $3.3 million in state funding.

On the other end of the spectrum, government funding accounted for thirty-four percent (34%), or $563.8 million, of Planned Parenthood's revenue\textsuperscript{10}. Planned Parenthood currently reports assets of over $1.8 billion, and over $1.6 billion in revenue for its 2017-2018 Fiscal Year\textsuperscript{11}. While Planned Parenthood is substantially funded—at the expense of the American taxpayer—they continue to charge fees to clients seeking their services, as described further below.

**Third, PHCs expand options and provide needed care for women, especially those desiring to carry to term.** Despite being well-funded and charging clients for services, Planned Parenthood offers limited services to women. According to its annual report\textsuperscript{12}, Planned Parenthood’s services include abortion, STI testing and treatment, contraception, cancer screenings and prevention, and “other women’s health services.” Notably absent are critical services PHCs provide, including ultrasounds, parenting education, adoption services, sexual risk avoidance education, housing, and material support for clients and their babies.

The provision of ultrasounds is particularly important to enable a woman to make an informed choice about her pregnancy. The National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, which offers medical conversion for PHCs, found\textsuperscript{13} that “established pro-life medical clinics report that more than 80 percent of abortion-minded mothers choose life after they see their unborn baby via ultrasound.”

PHCs, unlike Planned Parenthoods, offer ongoing support after pregnancy, regardless of the pregnancy decision. This support includes parenting education, housing, material assistance, and even post-abortion support. These services are provided in addition to healthcare services, such as prenatal care, pregnancy diagnosis, and STI testing.

PHCs also offer services designed to strengthen families, including parenting education classes and fatherhood programs. PHCs often tailor their myriad services to include services meeting the specific needs of their communities. For example, some centers offer tutoring and support for teen parents to complete their education, while others may offer referrals addressing

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\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

opioid addiction or public education on handling sex trafficking issues. By funding PHCs, states offer badly needed services assisting families choosing childbirth.

Fourth, PHCs provide no-cost healthcare for needy women and support for families. Pregnancy centers consistently offer their services at no cost to their clients. Unbeknownst to many Americans, Planned Parenthood charges for its services, despite receiving significant government funding.

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England’s cost calculator\(^\text{14}\) reveals that a single, 30-year-old woman making only $15,000 a year would be charged $116 for a well woman’s exam, and $20 for a pregnancy test. These same services can be obtained from many PHCs for free. As one example, Florida’s Pregnancy Support Services Program, which is funded by the state, provides free well woman exams, pregnancy tests, and other services at multiple locations\(^\text{15}\).

For abortions, Planned Parenthood’s fees are even more deplorable. The woman making $15,000 a year will be charged $650 for a chemical abortion (abortion pill) or between $650-895 for a surgical abortion (increasing based on gestational age up to 18.6 weeks). Planned Parenthood even has the gall to charge an additional $110 for “optional sedation” for what is a painful procedure, likely discouraging low-income women from seeking relief from the pain. The abortion prices are the same whether the woman makes $15,000 annually or $120,000 annually.

Fifth, PHCs engage their communities. In 2017, an estimated 64,700 community volunteers\(^\text{16}\) served clients in PHCs, with 7,500 of these volunteers being medical professionals. PHCs are well known for engaging community volunteers, so much so that the White House USA Freedom Corps honored 150 PHC volunteers in a White House ceremony\(^\text{17}\) in 2008. Then Assistant Secretary for Health Joxel Garcia, M.D., M.P.H, stated, “These volunteers have spent countless hours serving the most vulnerable among us. Their efforts deserve recognition and our deepest appreciation. Their services provide these women and their babies the opportunity for a healthier beginning.” Alison Young, then-director of USA Freedom Corps, stated of the volunteers, “As they serve women in need, they spread the very best of the compassionate volunteer spirit that keeps America strong.” As a matter of routine, PHCs engage churches and


community organizations\textsuperscript{18} such as community health centers, domestic violence organizations, legal aid, state health departments, Catholic Charities, and the American Red Cross, to name a few.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, PHCs have proven to be a safe, healthy, and desirable environment for the clients they serve. While the abortion industry, including Planned Parenthood, has been found to engage in practices endangering\textsuperscript{19} women’s health, PHCs abide by high standards of Care and Competence\textsuperscript{20}. Perhaps what speaks best to the high level of care is that new clients are most commonly referred\textsuperscript{21} to PHCs by word-of-mouth through existing or former PHC clients! In 2016, at least 97\%\textsuperscript{22} of clients at PHCs affiliated with Care Net (a national affiliation organization for PHCs) indicated that their overall experience at the center was positive. Likewise, the negative emotional, mental and physical risks of abortion are well-documented\textsuperscript{23}, and PHCs are essential to provide women with the information they need to make a knowledgeable decision regarding their pregnancy. An industry that profits from abortion cannot be trusted to fully share the negative effects of abortion with women.

Remarkably, PHCs have found an effective way to serve their communities with life-affirming, healthy options, at no cost to clients, while saving taxpayer dollars. PHCs allow taxpayers to invest in services that result in tax savings and a thriving community. In contrast, the abortion industry continues to take taxpayer funding, while charging clients for services that have been shown to cause damage to women, children, and families. In short, funding PHCs is a win-win for citizens, clients, and communities. More states should consider funding PHCs so that women facing unintended pregnancies can get the compassionate care they deserve, and so that communities and citizens are better served.

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\textsuperscript{22} Care Net (2016). The Truth About “Crisis Pregnancy Centers.” Retrieved from https://www.care-net.org/hubfs/Downloads/The_Truth_About_Crisis_Pregnancy_Centers.pdf?hsCtaTracking=a06eb313-a1fe-45c0-813a-236ab3c8f8fe%7C19a83cca-5f9e-4352-8c70-bb7f26222f7c.