

12. Religious Freedom in Reproductive Health Act

Issue Overview

The Unregulated Pregnancy Clinic (UPC) industry is large and widespread. More than 2,600 pregnancy centers operate in all 50 states,¹⁷⁵ most of which affiliate with one or more of three national organizations: Care Net, Heartbeat International, and National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA).

Over the past three years, [State] has granted \$XXXX to pregnancy centers. XX pregnancy centers operate in [State], and XX has received funding from the state. However, there is little transparency in the grant reporting or accounting process.

Overwhelmingly, [insert what the state calls UPCs] are religion-based nonprofits or subsidiaries of a church. The umbrella groups that help direct the programming for these centers – Care Net, Heartbeat International, and National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA) – are Christian organizations. Religious organizations may provide medical or social programs in [State], as long as they don't violate their clients' rights to freedom of religion.

Some [insert what the state calls UPCs] require participation in religious programming. Specifically, some condition the provision of services or material resources like diapers, packs of baby wipes, baby clothing outfits, car seats, strollers, cribs, or containers of baby formula on a requirement that clients attend classes or other center programming with religious content.¹⁷⁶

[State] is dedicated to religious freedom, which, by definition, means the state will not compel religious participation. Compelling clients to attend or participate in religious instruction is not a proper use of state funds.

Taxpayer dollars should not be wasted or misallocated. The legislature and the state administration have an obligation to ensure that funds granted to any nonprofit are spent efficiently and effectively. The American Medical Association urges that: "public funding only support programs that provide complete, non-directive, medically accurate health information to support patients' informed, voluntary decisions."¹⁷⁷