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Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
Sen, Caryn Tyson, Chair

Opponent Testimony, Written

SB498– Establishing a tax credit for contributions to eligible charitable organizations operating pregnancy centers

Chair Tyson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB498.

Mainstream OPPOSES SB498. This proposal is an attempt to undermine a person’s right to safely access reproductive health care and provides blatant financial favoritism for “pregnancy centers,” or anti-abortion centers often based in religious beliefs and teachings. **The state-sponsored financial favoritism of anti-abortion pregnancy centers is based on specific religious teachings, and SB498 imposes this religious favoritism upon all Kansans – a clear violation of religious freedom as guaranteed by the First Amendment.**

Some questions must be asked when establishing the true purpose of this tax bill and it’s value for Kansans: why does SB498 only provide state-sponsored financial support for centers offering services “for the express purpose of providing assistance to women in order to carry their pregnancy to term, encourage parenting or adoption, prevent abortion and promote healthy childbirth?” Why not expand these tax credits and exemptions to other nonprofits providing support for families? It’s simple - SB498 isn’t meant to help Kansans; it’s sole purpose is to reduce access to safe and legal abortions.

The pregnancy centers that would financially benefit from this proposed sales tax exemption and an increase in charitable contribution tax credit are often not legitimate healthcare centers. Instead they 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

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

disinformation like abortion reversal². SB498 financially favors pregnancy centers known to provide unproven medical information and coercive counseling with mandated faith-based courses³.

According to the fiscal note, SB498 would result in a reduction of over \$800 million in state funds. While some of these proposed tax credits, like the income tax credit of \$1,000 for each qualifying child, would indeed offset the expense of having and raising a child, we oppose hiding these credits within a bill with a primary purpose of benefiting anti-abortion centers. Likewise, we oppose yet another attempt to establish fetal personhood with the tax credit for an “unborn child” instead of providing real financial supports for struggling families.

Kansas voters have already spoken. We support the constitutional right to reproductive health care, and it is our position that this does not include public dollars diverted to unethical, anti-abortion clinics with coercive tactics and disinformation that imposes 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 SB498. We urge you to reject this proposal that would violate the separation of religion and government – a core tenet of our democracy and cornerstone of religious freedom.

Thank you,

Laurel Burchfield
Mainstream

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>

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