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Oral PROPONENT testimony for HB 2789, AN ACT concerning abortion; establishing the pregnancy compassion program and the pregnancy compassion public awareness program; providing services that promote childbirth to women facing unplanned pregnancies; establishing requirements and penalties for failure to fulfill program contract requirements; promoting public awareness of such services; establishing the pregnancy compassion fund; making transfers to such fund; prescribing guidelines for the expenditure of moneys credited thereto; relating to license plates; establishing a fee on the In God We Trust license plate and the choose life license plate and using such fees to provide additional revenue for the alternatives to abortion program; amending K.S.A. 8-1,160 and 8-1,183 and repealing the existing sections.

TO: Madam Chair Representative Landwehr and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Lucrecia Nold, Public Policy Specialist, Kansas Catholic Conference

DATE: February 16, 2024

Madam Chair Landwehr and committee members,

My name is Lucrecia Nold, and I serve as the Policy Specialist for the Kansas Catholic Conference, representing the Catholic Bishops of Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a PROPONENT to bill HB 2789.

Sacred Scripture has spoken to us for centuries with the words “Love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mark 12:31). In more recent years we often are told to abide by the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have done unto you”. We are called to help those around us, especially those who need extra love, care, and support.

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) and maternity homes excel at providing these essential acts for women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. They welcome all who need their services. With around 3,000 locations within the United States—and about 50 in Kansas—PRC’s and maternity homes operate at the grassroots level in our communities where needs are often hidden.

Pope St. John Paul II acknowledged the vital work and care that these centers provide: “Newborn life is also served by centers of assistance and homes or centers where new life receives a welcome. Thanks to the work of such centers, many unmarried mothers and couples in difficulty discover new hope and find assistance and support in overcoming hardship and the fear of accepting a newly conceived life.” (The Gospel of Life [Evangelium Vitae], no. 88)

PRC’s and maternity homes throughout the state of Kansas offer supportive and non-judgmental options for women who find themselves overwhelmed and scared. The services they provide may include ultrasounds, OB/GYN referrals, parenting classes, job training,

housing assistance, diapers, formula, and more. These services are provided at no expense to the expecting or new mother and are provided through the generosity of charitable givers.

The need for PRC services is growing even as Kansas is becoming a greater destination for abortion in the Midwest. This is why we are asking the citizens of Kansas to continue making this nominal investment in the financial support of Pregnancy Resource Centers and Maternity Homes. This investment will help women in unplanned pregnancies, allowing them to have real choices in their time of need.

As Pope Francis has stated, "All life has inestimable value even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor...deserve the utmost reverence and respect."

Women who have found themselves in a moment of vulnerability, fear, and uncertainty deserve our support and respect. They deserve to know that their fellow Kansans are here to support them. That we love our neighbors as ourselves. This is why the Kansas Catholic Conference offers our support of HB 2789.



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