
AMANDA NEDWESKI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 61ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

September 19, 2023

Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
Testimony on Senate Bill 345

Chairman Jacque and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill (SB) 345, which is part of the “Embrace them Both” package. Underscoring that the unborn are individuals with rights, “Embrace them Both” aims to focus on positive ways in which we can uplift and support both babies and mothers during pregnancy and post-birth.

Throughout pregnancy, between pregnancies, and beyond birth, Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRCs) in Wisconsin provide a variety of crucial medical and support services free of charge, such as:

- Crisis pregnancy counseling
- Prenatal care
- Parenting education
- Material needs for babies and young children, such as diapers, formula, car seats, cribs, clothing, etc.
- Childcare assistance
- Transportation
- Free housing and safe-haven housing
- Assistance applying for Badgercare
- Job search and application assistance
- Adoption options and counseling
- Post-abortion healing
- Testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

This is not an anti-abortion bill. It has nothing to do with abortion. SB 345 highlights that we want mothers to be supported regardless of their choice. More often than not, the choice is to nurture a pregnancy all the way through the miracle of birth. In order to support that choice, we must be willing to support the organizations who are ready and willing to provide these services free of charge.

Women who are pregnant should be given clear, honest, and accurate information prior to making a decision. This information may include verification of a pregnancy and determination of how far along it is with an ultrasound to ensure there is not an ectopic pregnancy or other high-risk factors for both the child and the mother. PRCs provide a broad scope of services to help women and children on a practical level, often much more than other organizations. This

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 61ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

bill supports the much-needed efforts of PRCs in our communities with fiscal resources to continue the ongoing contributions they make to provide critical healthcare services, often in areas where mothers are otherwise underserved by the healthcare system.

Pregnancy Resource Centers work to offer resources, support, and empowerment targeting physical, emotional, and spiritual health, as well as financial and occupational advising. They are a critical resource in our communities, and we have an opportunity now to support their contributions to people in need at a time that can be both joyful and very stressful.

SB 345 requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to award a \$1,000,000 grant per fiscal year to Choose Life Wisconsin. In turn, Choose Life Wisconsin would award grants of up to \$50,000 to PRCs across the state. The bill does require Choose Life Wisconsin to submit an annual report to DHS with detail about the PRCs that receive grant money.

This legislation is an investment in hope for children, for mothers, and for families. It affirms that ALL life has meaning and value, and that we are ready and willing to protect, uplift, and embrace it at all stages.



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senator André Jacque, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism

FROM: Tia Izzia, Associate Director for Human Life & Social Concerns

DATE: September 19, 2023

RE: Support for Senate Bills 300, 343, 344, 345, and 346

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, urges you to support the five bills before your committee today that truly empower and protect the dignity of human life in Wisconsin: Senate Bills 300, 343, 344, 345, and 346.

Senate Bill 300 *Abortion Activity Prohibition*

SB-300 has a clear and straightforward objective – to ensure that public funds, employees, and assets do not assist in the taking of human life. All too often, abortion is seen as a quick solution to human problems and framed as health care. It bears repeating that taking a human life cannot and can never be considered health care, for it is neither healthy nor caring. Since 1919, the bishops of the United States have been vocal advocates of the idea that all Americans should enjoy access to affordable health care, especially those who are vulnerable or of limited means. As the U.S. bishops stated in 1993, “Health care is more than a commodity; it is a basic human right, an essential safeguard of human life and dignity.”

We affirm that Wisconsin must continue to seek improved access to comprehensive health care services for those in need, especially women. However, abortion, and activities that facilitate abortion, do not reflect the respect for human dignity that should be at the heart of everything a government does on behalf of its citizens. SB-300 does what government ought to do: protect the living.

Senate Bill 343 *Abortion Definition*

An abortion, or the intentional killing of a preborn child, is never medically necessary to save a woman’s life. SB-343 clarifies that a medical procedure designed to prevent the death of a pregnant woman, such as the removal of a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy, is not an abortion. In rare instances, a medical procedure that saves a mother’s life has the unintended consequence of leading to a birth in which the child does not survive. In those cases, every effort is still made to save the child’s life, even though the child’s death may be an unintended consequence of the intervention. When the death of a preborn child is imminent, perinatal hospice and palliative care provide families with a nonviolent way to care for their child and grieve a premature death.¹ Catholic hospitals have led the way in caring for women and children in these very complicated cases and know how to care for both.

¹ Perinatal Hospice and Palliative Care, www.perinatalhospice.org/list-of-programs.

Senate Bill 344 *Dependent Tax Exemption*

SB-344 increases the dollar amount taxpayers can claim as an exemption for every dependent from \$700 to \$1,000 and extends that coverage not only to children aged 0-17, but also to preborn children. As any parent can tell you, costs begin to add up long before a baby arrives, from the cost of healthcare to preparing their home to welcome their child. Further, a woman experiencing medical complications during her pregnancy may need to take time off of work, which will likely be unpaid. Childcare rates too have hit Wisconsin families especially hard. As costs continue to climb, Wisconsin must take steps to support the economic well-being of families. SB-344 is a commonsense bill that can provide real support to families right now.

Senate Bill 345 *Grants to Pregnancy Resource Centers*

For decades, Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRCs) have been on the ground helping to immediately respond to women's individual needs. A state that is committed to the welfare of women and children should assist these organizations that provide everything from material goods, parenting classes, and housing assistance. These organizations are adept at tailoring their assistance to the needs of each woman thus ensuring that no woman is left to shoulder her burdens alone. SB-345's critical funding will help countless women and families across Wisconsin.

Senate Bill 346 *Financial Assistance for Adoption*

If a woman chooses to place her child for adoption, there should be no doubt in her mind that there is a family that can welcome and raise her child. However, for the many families willing and eager to adopt, the cost of adoption is often a steep barrier. For this reason, SB-346 creates an Adoption Financial Assistance Grant Program to make adoption a more affordable option for all Wisconsin families. Awards are limited to \$10,000 per family and may only be awarded to or on behalf of families in this state who are adopting children in this state.

Each of these bills does what we need at this moment in history: to truly embrace both woman and child, rather than pitting them against each other. In the words of Pope Francis, we can never "solve a problem by eliminating a person" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 214). This is not a uniquely Catholic or even religious idea. This is just common sense.

And while these bills are crucial, much more needs to be done. Wisconsin must expand postpartum care, reduce costs for birth, eliminate racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality, support birth mothers, remove sales tax on feminine hygiene products and baby supplies, and more. Together, we can build an economy and society in Wisconsin where women and children can live safely and readily access the resources they need to thrive.

September 19, 2003

Good afternoon, Chairman Jacque and Members of the Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism.

My name is Krystine Crawley. I am the Executive Director of Life's Connection, a medical community health and education center that provides free prenatal, postnatal, and other services and programs to Wisconsin women, men, and their children. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 345.

My organization is one of over seventy pregnancy resource centers in our great state and is proud to help the people that come to us for the free services we provide. Centers like mine provide all we do at no cost to our client. We rely solely on donations only. I am here this afternoon so you can get to know me and the organization I direct because the benefits we offer to men and women in our state are positive, impactful and life changing.

Life's Connection is under the direction of a licensed physician, is HIPPA compliant and is state licensed to provide STD testing, pregnancy testing, and limited ultrasound services. Additionally, our center is proud to offer incentive-based prenatal and postnatal education, parenting education, life skills coaching, material support, pregnancy options counseling, adoption support as well as monumental support to anyone facing miscarriage and stillbirth.

So, what does this look like?

Our staff consists of our licensed medical director, nurses, ultrasonographer and other professionals who walk hand in hand with the men and women who come to us in their journey whether it be a crisis situation or even needing everyday support.

Not only do we provide the much-needed medical services of the organization, we go further to help all of our clients including at-risk women and men to end potentially destructive cycles that can last for generations. We do this by providing them with the education and support they need to find jobs, further their education, build life-skills, learn healthy relationships, and embrace opportunities to bring themselves out of poverty and build their families.

Medical services such as STD testing are important in the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases. We test, treat, provide important education and collaborate with our clients' physicians to continue care for the individuals.

We provide medical grade Pregnancy testing to confirm a pregnancy and first trimester limited ultrasound to confirm viability. Two out of four pregnancies end in miscarriage. If a woman is facing miscarriage, our centers will help them through the process. We work with most hospitals in our counties and neighboring counties who refer women to us for this support as well. We have supported hundreds of women and men through the loss providing hope and healing. Our services include grief counseling during and after a loss, the option to bury the babies' remains in a local cemetery, materials for the couples and also help for fathers because they grieve too.

As you know, we do not refer for abortion, we educate about the potential emotional and physical risks associated with abortion and we listen to them in their moment of uncertainty. If they choose to carry their pregnancy to term, we offer them healthy options through providing the education and resources they need to have a healthy baby and a strong family. We also work with adoption agencies to support women who choose to place their baby for adoption. We start working with clients during pregnancy, a critical time to address concerns both medical and practical before the baby arrives. Our goal is to provide our parents with prenatal support, so they have healthy babies.

We offer incentive-based education. In this program, families earn mommy money when taking classes that prepare them for childbirth, parenting and building families. Each of our centers house beautiful fully stocked

baby boutiques that parents can shop in using their mommy money. This offers them not only education but tangible support, so they are able to provide material items that their families need.

Each time a client takes a class they are provided with a bundle of diapers. We all know how expensive diapers and other baby items are, so what a wonderful way for our families to obtain the things they need and lighten their pocketbooks. They are now able to pay bills, car payments, and buy groceries to meet their other everyday needs.

I'd like to highlight just a few of our educational classes, all of which are hospital based and written by health educators on national level.

Our childbirth classes have been helpful in preventing preterm labor and other potential pregnancy issues while giving our moms and dads the tools they need when in labor. Our clients have healthier babies with healthier outcomes.

Our car seat safety class provides guidelines for car seat and booster seat safety. Car seats and boosters provide protection for infants and children in a crash, yet car crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. This education saves lives and offers parents the opportunity to earn a free car seat.

Our Safe Sleep program is a national Cribs for Kids program that prevents infant sleep-related deaths by educating parents and caregivers on the importance of practicing safe sleep for their babies and by providing portable cribs to families who, otherwise, cannot afford a safe place for their babies to sleep. Some areas in our state are very high in sleep related infant deaths so we seek to diminish these outcomes.

All our other classes follow the same criteria that Life's Connection offers in education and then provide the material support needed for our families. We know that our parents are thriving through our programs.

Our focus is not only on the mothers but includes the fathers too. In fact, we offer The National Fatherhood Initiative program which helps to build and celebrate the vital role of fathers while building the skills to become a great dad.

Because we focus heavily on working with our clients on life-skills we have been extremely successful in bringing them out of poverty and unhealthy situations.

Jaden came in, a single parent in a broken relationship, attending college with no support to continue her pregnancy. Life's Connection walked along side her when she ultimately made the decision to parent her unborn baby. During her journey with us, she went through all our classes, worked with our loving staff, learned important life skills, and gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Jaden graduated college, restored her relationship with the father of her baby, and they were able to build a healthy and strong union using the skills taught at our center. Their success is evident. In fact, she is currently entering graduate school in the medical field.

This wonderful couple recently married, bought a big home and are together in a successful married relationship. They thank us all the time for being here.

This is one only one example of the positive and impactful change in the lives of thousands of families that we and other pregnancy support centers in the state have influenced.

It is my hope that you were able to get to know, though me this afternoon, how important our centers are to our communities and our state. And how important Choose Life Wisconsin, Inc. is to the funding of our work. Life's Connection centers have received Choose Life funds over the last five annual grant cycles. It would be incredible for even just one of our centers to be awarded a \$50,000 check. By moving forward with Senate Bill 345, the significant grant offered will allow our organization and others the robust funding needed to provide Wisconsin families the support that positively impacts their lives.



Romaine Robert Quinn

STATE SENATOR • 25TH SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Romaine Robert Quinn
To: Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
Re: Testimony on Embrace Them Both: Senate Bills 343, 344, 345, 346
Date: September 19, 2023

Thank you Senator Jacque and committee members for receiving my testimony today on this important package of bills that reaffirms the pro-life position of embracing both the mother and child. I could not be prouder to work on these bills with some amazing pro-life legislators and advocacy groups. Taken together, the bills demonstrate a clear commitment to families throughout the state and begin to build back the culture of life that is slowly eroding from our state's cultural discourse.

Senate Bill 343

It has always been the pro-life position to protect both the life of the mother and her unborn child during pregnancy. Though I join many others in saying that the current laws in Wisconsin already provide for these safeguards, pro-abortion groups have sadly sowed doubt on the matter. Whether you say you are pro-life or pro-choice, I think we can all agree that clarity is a good thing. This bill provides that clarity by stating that the medical procedures of an early induction or cesarean section performed due to a medical emergency, the removal of a miscarriage, or the removal of an ectopic, anembryonic, or molar pregnancy, are not abortions. However, in all of these cases, a physician must make reasonable medical efforts to preserve *both* the life of the mother and her unborn child. Pregnancy is a miracle, and every life, beginning at conception, is a gift from God. But we don't live in a perfect world, and we have to face that things can go wrong during pregnancy. This bill would affirm that, in that event, Wisconsin's laws protect the medical professional, the mother's life, and the baby.

Senate Bill 344

Under current law, people filing Wisconsin income taxes can claim a \$700 tax exemption for each dependent. Thirty-one percent of all filers with a net tax liability will claim this exemption for 2023, with over 1.5 million such claims expected. This is a simple way our current laws financially benefit families through our tax code. This bill increases that exemption from \$700 to \$1,000. The Department of Revenue estimates this change will benefit Wisconsin families \$19.5 million annually.

A child's life begins at conception. We know, too, that expenses for families begin long before birth. Under this bill, a claimant can submit proof of a heartbeat with their taxes and be eligible to claim the dependent exemption. This policy change, which acknowledges the importance of all children, is estimated by the Department of Revenue to benefit Wisconsin families \$700,000 annually.

Senate Bill 345

Pregnancy Resource Centers provide critical services such as crisis pregnancy counseling, unwed mother support, abstinence programs, care of mothers and babies, and safe haven housing. These centers have also provided post-abortion healing. There are more than 60 of these centers throughout the state, and I am proud to say that I have some great ones in my district. These Pregnancy Resource Centers are phenomenal assets to our community, open to anyone who finds themselves worried or anxious about an expected or unexpected, planned or unplanned, or wanted or unwanted pregnancy. There is already a mechanism in place to financially support these centers without any overhead costs – through the Choose Life license plate fund administered by Choose Life Wisconsin. This bill would provide an annual grant to that organization for the purposes of better supporting these amazing resource centers for even more families in the future.

Senate Bill 346

Private adoptions can cost in the tens of thousands of dollars. Families considering adoption sometimes stop the process or withdraw from consideration because they cannot afford it. This is wrong – we should continue to support all families (both birth families and adoptive families) for whom adoption is their path.

There are a few organizations in Wisconsin that offer financial assistance to adoptive families once they have reached a certain point in the process. For those curious to learn more, a list can be found at the website for the Coalition for Children, Youth & Families. Again, in an effort to reduce overhead, this bill creates a competitive grant program to be awarded to an organization already operating a financial assistance program to supplement their work.

Under the bill, families can receive up to \$10,000 to defray adoption expenses. The bill allocates \$5 million for the competitive grant program and limits the amount that can be used for administrative expenses. Furthermore, to ensure this is lifting up Wisconsin birth and adoptive families, this grant is available for Wisconsin families who are adopting Wisconsin children.

It has been a great honor and uplifting experience to work on bills that reinforce the sanctity of life and the dignity of the whole family. These bills enter a political arena fraught with deep emotions. However, I ask that you all step back from those swirling winds and examine these bills for what they represent on their own. No matter where you stand on the issue of abortion, these bills simply provide clarity and support for growing families. These bills are about mothers, children, fathers, and families. Please join me in supporting this Embrace Them Both package of bills.



KAREN HURD

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 68TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Bill 344, 345, 346
Public Testimony
Senate Licensing, Constitution and Federalism Committee
September 19, 2023

Thank you, Chair Jacque and members of the committee for holding this hearing on Senate Bills 344, 345, and 346.

The strength of Wisconsin is dependent upon the strength of its people. Long known to legislators is the importance of the family and especially the children that belong to those families. The future of Wisconsin will be shaped and guided by not only us but most importantly the children who follow us as they grow into adult Wisconsinites.

The statutes of Wisconsin clearly reflect the intent of lawmakers that have gone before us. In Chapter 765 the statute says that it is the intent of the law “to promote the stability and best interests of marriage and the family.”

SB 344 provides an income tax credit for dependent children which includes unborn children which underscores Wisconsin’s commitment to families and children. By recognizing a child in the womb as a viable person demonstrates our support of **ALL** children born and unborn.

SB 345 provides funding for pregnancy resource centers which gives parents an opportunity to learn about resources available to them. As I have walked through my life, it has been my constant observation that decisions are made without adequate knowledge. I quote Benjamin Franklin, “A nation of well-informed men who have been taught to know and prize the rights which God has given them cannot be enslaved. It is in the region of ignorance that tyranny begins.” Pregnancy resource centers help inform our people.

SB 346 establishes a grant program to provide financial assistance to prospective adoptive families. When I was campaigning for the seat which I now hold, I asked at the doors what issues were most important. Helping prospective adoptive families was one of the issues that surfaced over and over again. Adoption is a means by which we can help our children and the parents who want to increase their family through the adoptive process.

Mr. Chairman, I fully support these bills. They help make our future generations Wisconsin-strong.



Date: September 19, 2023
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
From: Dr. Leslie Abitz, Legislative Chair
Re: In opposition to Senate Bill 300, Senate Bill 343, and Senate Bill 345

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) represents over 60,000 obstetrician-gynecologists and works to improve the lives of all people seeking obstetric and gynecologic care. Access to the full spectrum of medical care, including abortion, is essential for people's health, safety, and well-being. Physicians must be able to provide medical care to people without outside interference. I write to you today on behalf of the Wisconsin Section in opposition of several proposals before the committee.

Senate Bill 300 is a serious threat to the OB/GYN residency training program at UW Health and at a time when the shortage of OB/GYNs available to serve Wisconsinites regardless of zip code is already at crisis levels. According to data from the American Medical Association nearly half of all counties in Wisconsin have only one OB/GYN or none at all and at a time when Wisconsin is seeing an increase in maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Senate Bill 300 will worsen the number of residents trained.

Senate Bill 343 is ideologically driven and uses non-medically appropriate language to codify restrictions to patients being able to access needed abortion care. WI ACOG has long affirmed that laws must not interfere with a patient's ability to be treated by a physician according to the best currently available medical evidence and the physician's professional medical judgement. There is no one-size-fits-all law that can take every individual, family, or medical conditions into account, making legislative interference in the practice of medicine incredibly dangerous. Reasons why it is not feasible to create an inclusive list of conditions that qualify as "medical emergencies" include: a patient may experience a combination of medical conditions or symptoms that, together, become life-threatening; pregnancy often exacerbates conditions or symptoms that are stable in nonpregnant individuals; patients may be lucid and appear to be in stable condition but demonstrate deteriorating health; and no single patient's condition progresses at the same pace.

Further, this legislation sets us backwards to restore meaningful access to abortion care services. Distinguishing what does and does not classify as a felony will almost certainly result in refusal and denial of appropriate medical care, and it does not center on clinicians' ability to make and act upon unique medical situations. Conflating abortion care services with murder stigmatizes lifesaving health care and defames physicians who provide critical care, and attacks people who are already suffering the loss of a wanted pregnancy. Decisions around needed reproductive medical care belong between a patient and their physician. Attempts to stipulate when, why or how a physician can provide care to their patient represents legislative interference. Patients have the right to be counseled and treated by their physician according to the best available medical evidence and their physician's professional medical judgement. Ultimately, Senate Bill 343 weakens the patient-physician relationship.

(OVER)



Senate Bill 345 would provide financial support to Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRC), also known as Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC). These organizations represent themselves as legitimate reproductive health care clinics but in fact function to dissuade people from accessing abortion. Many CPCs are not in fact medical clinics, but rather unregulated and nonmedical organizations. Staff members at these unregulated facilities have no legal obligation to provide pregnant people with accurate information and are not subject to HIPAA or required by law to maintain client confidentiality. As these Centers do not provide comprehensive care and information, WI ACOG cannot support Senate Bill 345.

In closing, on behalf of WI ACOG I proudly stand behind our members who provide comprehensive health care delivered with quality, safety, integrity, and compassion. The bills before us today create a dangerous and hostile environment for physicians and patients, and ultimately prevent doctors from providing a patient with the best possible health care. I urge you to oppose.



**Gracie Skogman, Legislative Director, Wisconsin Right to Life
Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
SB 300, SB 343, SB 344, SB 345, SB 346
Tuesday, September 19th, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Jaque and members of the committee, for your time today. My name is Gracie Skogman, and I am the Legislative Director of Wisconsin Right to Life, testifying in favor of SB 300, SB 343, SB 344, SB 345, and SB 346.

As pro-life advocates, we care deeply about protecting children and their mothers, to ensure that both are offered comprehensive care and support. Through our advocacy, we work with the many Pregnancy Resource Centers in our state that provide medical care and support to women during pregnancy and beyond, often meeting women in their moments of most need. We also hear firsthand from potential adoptive parents, regarding the financial struggles they may face when hoping to adopt.

Women in Wisconsin are deserving of comprehensive support and resources through pregnancy and beyond, and this legislation takes another step towards achieving that goal. Additionally, families in our state who are looking to adopt or would like to choose life for their children deserve to be fully supported. This is fundamental to creating a culture of life in our state.

Additionally, this bill package provides necessary clarity that medically necessary and lifesaving procedures, such as treatment for an ectopic pregnancy, do not constitute an abortion. In a culture that increasingly refers to abortion as "healthcare," it is a vital reminder that abortion is the opposite, as healthcare is focused on the saving of life, and abortion takes innocent human life.

Wisconsin Right to Life urge support of this legislation, to further create a culture of life and support for both preborn children and mothers in our state.

Thank you very much for your time,
Gracie Skogman



Wisconsin Family Action

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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 345

PUBLIC HEARING – COMMITTEE ON LICENSING, CONSTITUTION AND FEDERALISM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

JACK HOOGENDYK, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DIRECTOR

WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION

Thank you, Chairman Jacque and committee members, for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 345. I am Jack Hoogendyk, Legislative and Policy Director for Wisconsin Family Action. Wisconsin Family Action supports Senate Bill 345.

SB 345 provides funding for Wisconsin's pregnancy care centers through the already established Choose Life Wisconsin, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Wisconsin corporation that was begun for the specific purpose of receiving funds from the sale of the Choose Life Wisconsin license plate. The plate was first made available in October 2017, and funds from the sale of the plate began in May 2018. Since May 2018, nearly \$300,000 has been distributed to over 30 Wisconsin pregnancy care centers in the form of grants. Every penny of the funds that have come to Choose Life Wisconsin from the sale of the license plates has gone to the centers. Wisconsin Family Council and Pro-Life Wisconsin underwrite all of Choose Life Wisconsin's overhead in order to ensure that can happen.

Choose Life Wisconsin has an impeccable record of awarding and tracking grants and keeping overhead and administrative costs covered by these other organizations. SB 345 provides for the Department of Health Services to grant to Choose Life Wisconsin \$1,000,000 per fiscal year that Choose Life Wisconsin would then distribute to qualified pregnancy care centers in amounts not to exceed \$50,000 per center. The bill also provides for appropriate reporting on the distributions. The organizations covering Choose Life Wisconsin overhead and administrative costs have no plans to stop doing that, which means every penny that Choose Life Wisconsin receives from DHS would go to these incredibly efficient, life-saving centers that are all around our state to help them help women in crisis pregnancies.

Here is the reality of what the majority of these amazing centers provide. Young women experiencing pregnancy often find many challenges to bringing a new life into the world. Many of these women do not have the financial resources to access the things they need to deliver a healthy baby. Providing tangible assistance to young parents is essential. That assistance can be provided by the state taxpayers, and much is done through Badger Care, for example. But, many of the needs of pregnant women and their partners are being met by private, non-profit organizations.

A shining example of this are the pregnancy resource centers, also known as pregnancy help centers, located throughout the state. There are over 55 such centers in Wisconsin. Virtually all of them are funded by private sources. They provide their services to whoever needs them and do so at zero cost to their clients.

Most of these centers are medical in nature and have been federally recognized and qualified as "reproductive health care providers." They provide pregnancy tests, ob. ultrasounds and STD tests, administered by trained registered nurses under the oversight of a licensed medical director. They are also voluntarily HIPAA compliant. The results for the clients and the taxpayers have been stunning.

In a 2019 comprehensive survey of just 23 of these 55 centers in Wisconsin, the following information was compiled:

- They provided services and materials valued at more than \$1.3 million, including
 - \$368,519 in medical services, *i.e.*, pregnancy tests, ob. ultrasounds and STD tests
 - \$540,520 in family services including
 - Free consultation
 - Free sexual risk avoidance presentations
 - Free parenting education sessions
 - \$128,256 in material items including diapers, baby wipes, car seats, strollers and baby clothing
- These 23 centers have over 115 staff, 25% of whom are licensed medical professionals, 400 volunteers, 15% of whom are licensed medical professionals.

Every dollar of the \$1.3 million in services these centers provided would have been borne by the clients themselves, many of whom do not have financial resources, or by the taxpayers of Wisconsin.

This legislation will not only serve to promote and support growing young families, it will also help new moms and dads be prepared physically and emotionally for the birth and proper care of their newborn child.

For these above stated reasons, we strongly support the passage of SB 345. Thank you.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 61ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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bill supports the much-needed efforts of PRCs in our communities with fiscal resources to continue the ongoing contributions they make to provide critical healthcare services, often in areas where mothers are otherwise underserved by the healthcare system.

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WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Senator André Jacque, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism

FROM: Tia Izzia, Associate Director for Human Life & Social Concerns

DATE: September 19, 2023

RE: Support for Senate Bills 300, 343, 344, 345, and 346

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, urges you to support the five bills before your committee today that truly empower and protect the dignity of human life in Wisconsin: Senate Bills 300, 343, 344, 345, and 346.

Senate Bill 300 *Abortion Activity Prohibition*

SB-300 has a clear and straightforward objective – to ensure that public funds, employees, and assets do not assist in the taking of human life. All too often, abortion is seen as a quick solution to human problems and framed as health care. It bears repeating that taking a human life cannot and can never be considered health care, for it is neither healthy nor caring. Since 1919, the bishops of the United States have been vocal advocates of the idea that all Americans should enjoy access to affordable health care, especially those who are vulnerable or of limited means. As the U.S. bishops stated in 1993, “Health care is more than a commodity; it is a basic human right, an essential safeguard of human life and dignity.”

We affirm that Wisconsin must continue to seek improved access to comprehensive health care services for those in need, especially women. However, abortion, and activities that facilitate abortion, do not reflect the respect for human dignity that should be at the heart of everything a government does on behalf of its citizens. SB-300 does what government ought to do: protect the living.

Senate Bill 343 *Abortion Definition*

An abortion, or the intentional killing of a preborn child, is never medically necessary to save a woman’s life. SB-343 clarifies that a medical procedure designed to prevent the death of a pregnant woman, such as the removal of a miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy, is not an abortion. In rare instances, a medical procedure that saves a mother’s life has the unintended consequence of leading to a birth in which the child does not survive. In those cases, every effort is still made to save the child’s life, even though the child’s death may be an unintended consequence of the intervention. When the death of a preborn child is imminent, perinatal hospice and palliative care provide families with a nonviolent way to care for their child and grieve a premature death.¹ Catholic hospitals have led the way in caring for women and children in these very complicated cases and know how to care for both.

¹ Perinatal Hospice and Palliative Care, www.perinatalhospice.org/list-of-programs.

Senate Bill 344 *Dependent Tax Exemption*

SB-344 increases the dollar amount taxpayers can claim as an exemption for every dependent from \$700 to \$1,000 and extends that coverage not only to children aged 0-17, but also to preborn children. As any parent can tell you, costs begin to add up long before a baby arrives, from the cost of healthcare to preparing their home to welcome their child. Further, a woman experiencing medical complications during her pregnancy may need to take time off of work, which will likely be unpaid. Childcare rates too have hit Wisconsin families especially hard. As costs continue to climb, Wisconsin must take steps to support the economic well-being of families. SB-344 is a commonsense bill that can provide real support to families right now.

Senate Bill 345 *Grants to Pregnancy Resource Centers*

For decades, Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRCs) have been on the ground helping to immediately respond to women's individual needs. A state that is committed to the welfare of women and children should assist these organizations that provide everything from material goods, parenting classes, and housing assistance. These organizations are adept at tailoring their assistance to the needs of each woman thus ensuring that no woman is left to shoulder her burdens alone. SB-345's critical funding will help countless women and families across Wisconsin.

Senate Bill 346 *Financial Assistance for Adoption*

If a woman chooses to place her child for adoption, there should be no doubt in her mind that there is a family that can welcome and raise her child. However, for the many families willing and eager to adopt, the cost of adoption is often a steep barrier. For this reason, SB-346 creates an Adoption Financial Assistance Grant Program to make adoption a more affordable option for all Wisconsin families. Awards are limited to \$10,000 per family and may only be awarded to or on behalf of families in this state who are adopting children in this state.

Each of these bills does what we need at this moment in history: to truly embrace both woman and child, rather than pitting them against each other. In the words of Pope Francis, we can never "solve a problem by eliminating a person" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 214). This is not a uniquely Catholic or even religious idea. This is just common sense.

And while these bills are crucial, much more needs to be done. Wisconsin must expand postpartum care, reduce costs for birth, eliminate racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality, support birth mothers, remove sales tax on feminine hygiene products and baby supplies, and more. Together, we can build an economy and society in Wisconsin where women and children can live safely and readily access the resources they need to thrive.

September 19, 2003

Good afternoon, Chairman Jacque and Members of the Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism.

My name is Krystine Crawley. I am the Executive Director of Life's Connection, a medical community health and education center that provides free prenatal, postnatal, and other services and programs to Wisconsin women, men, and their children. Thank you for this opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 345.

My organization is one of over seventy pregnancy resource centers in our great state and is proud to help the people that come to us for the free services we provide. Centers like mine provide all we do at no cost to our client. We rely solely on donations only. I am here this afternoon so you can get to know me and the organization I direct because the benefits we offer to men and women in our state are positive, impactful and life changing.

Life's Connection is under the direction of a licensed physician, is HIPPA compliant and is state licensed to provide STD testing, pregnancy testing, and limited ultrasound services. Additionally, our center is proud to offer incentive-based prenatal and postnatal education, parenting education, life skills coaching, material support, pregnancy options counseling, adoption support as well as monumental support to anyone facing miscarriage and stillbirth.

So, what does this look like?

Our staff consists of our licensed medical director, nurses, ultrasonographer and other professionals who walk hand in hand with the men and women who come to us in their journey whether it be a crisis situation or even needing everyday support.

Not only do we provide the much-needed medical services of the organization, we go further to help all of our clients including at-risk women and men to end potentially destructive cycles that can last for generations. We do this by providing them with the education and support they need to find jobs, further their education, build life-skills, learn healthy relationships, and embrace opportunities to bring themselves out of poverty and build their families.

Medical services such as STD testing are important in the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases. We test, treat, provide important education and collaborate with our clients' physicians to continue care for the individuals.

We provide medical grade Pregnancy testing to confirm a pregnancy and first trimester limited ultrasound to confirm viability. Two out of four pregnancies end in miscarriage. If a woman is facing miscarriage, our centers will help them through the process. We work with most hospitals in our counties and neighboring counties who refer women to us for this support as well. We have supported hundreds of women and men through the loss providing hope and healing. Our services include grief counseling during and after a loss, the option to bury the babies' remains in a local cemetery, materials for the couples and also help for fathers because they grieve too.

As you know, we do not refer for abortion, we educate about the potential emotional and physical risks associated with abortion and we listen to them in their moment of uncertainty. If they choose to carry their pregnancy to term, we offer them healthy options through providing the education and resources they need to have a healthy baby and a strong family. We also work with adoption agencies to support women who choose to place their baby for adoption. We start working with clients during pregnancy, a critical time to address concerns both medical and practical before the baby arrives. Our goal is to provide our parents with prenatal support, so they have healthy babies.

We offer incentive-based education. In this program, families earn mommy money when taking classes that prepare them for childbirth, parenting and building families. Each of our centers house beautiful fully stocked

baby boutiques that parents can shop in using their mommy money. This offers them not only education but tangible support, so they are able to provide material items that their families need.

Each time a client takes a class they are provided with a bundle of diapers. We all know how expensive diapers and other baby items are, so what a wonderful way for our families to obtain the things they need and lighten their pocketbooks. They are now able to pay bills, car payments, and buy groceries to meet their other everyday needs.

I'd like to highlight just a few of our educational classes, all of which are hospital based and written by health educators on national level.

Our childbirth classes have been helpful in preventing preterm labor and other potential pregnancy issues while giving our moms and dads the tools they need when in labor. Our clients have healthier babies with healthier outcomes.

Our car seat safety class provides guidelines for car seat and booster seat safety. Car seats and boosters provide protection for infants and children in a crash, yet car crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 13. This education saves lives and offers parents the opportunity to earn a free car seat.

Our Safe Sleep program is a national Cribs for Kids program that prevents infant sleep-related deaths by educating parents and caregivers on the importance of practicing safe sleep for their babies and by providing portable cribs to families who, otherwise, cannot afford a safe place for their babies to sleep. Some areas in our state are very high in sleep related infant deaths so we seek to diminish these outcomes.

All our other classes follow the same criteria that Life's Connection offers in education and then provide the material support needed for our families. We know that our parents are thriving through our programs.

Our focus is not only on the mothers but includes the fathers too. In fact, we offer The National Fatherhood Initiative program which helps to build and celebrate the vital role of fathers while building the skills to become a great dad.

Because we focus heavily on working with our clients on life-skills we have been extremely successful in bringing them out of poverty and unhealthy situations.

Jaden came in, a single parent in a broken relationship, attending college with no support to continue her pregnancy. Life's Connection walked along side her when she ultimately made the decision to parent her unborn baby. During her journey with us, she went through all our classes, worked with our loving staff, learned important life skills, and gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Jaden graduated college, restored her relationship with the father of her baby, and they were able to build a healthy and strong union using the skills taught at our center. Their success is evident. In fact, she is currently entering graduate school in the medical field.

This wonderful couple recently married, bought a big home and are together in a successful married relationship. They thank us all the time for being here.

This is one only one example of the positive and impactful change in the lives of thousands of families that we and other pregnancy support centers in the state have influenced.

It is my hope that you were able to get to know, though me this afternoon, how important our centers are to our communities and our state. And how important Choose Life Wisconsin, Inc. is to the funding of our work. Life's Connection centers have received Choose Life funds over the last five annual grant cycles. It would be incredible for even just one of our centers to be awarded a \$50,000 check. By moving forward with Senate Bill 345, the significant grant offered will allow our organization and others the robust funding needed to provide Wisconsin families the support that positively impacts their lives.



Romaine Robert Quinn

STATE SENATOR • 25TH SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Romaine Robert Quinn
To: Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
Re: Testimony on Embrace Them Both: Senate Bills 343, 344, 345, 346
Date: September 19, 2023

Thank you Senator Jacque and committee members for receiving my testimony today on this important package of bills that reaffirms the pro-life position of embracing both the mother and child. I could not be prouder to work on these bills with some amazing pro-life legislators and advocacy groups. Taken together, the bills demonstrate a clear commitment to families throughout the state and begin to build back the culture of life that is slowly eroding from our state's cultural discourse.

Senate Bill 343

It has always been the pro-life position to protect both the life of the mother and her unborn child during pregnancy. Though I join many others in saying that the current laws in Wisconsin already provide for these safeguards, pro-abortion groups have sadly sowed doubt on the matter. Whether you say you are pro-life or pro-choice, I think we can all agree that clarity is a good thing. This bill provides that clarity by stating that the medical procedures of an early induction or cesarean section performed due to a medical emergency, the removal of a miscarriage, or the removal of an ectopic, anembryonic, or molar pregnancy, are not abortions. However, in all of these cases, a physician must make reasonable medical efforts to preserve *both* the life of the mother and her unborn child. Pregnancy is a miracle, and every life, beginning at conception, is a gift from God. But we don't live in a perfect world, and we have to face that things can go wrong during pregnancy. This bill would affirm that, in that event, Wisconsin's laws protect the medical professional, the mother's life, and the baby.

Senate Bill 344

Under current law, people filing Wisconsin income taxes can claim a \$700 tax exemption for each dependent. Thirty-one percent of all filers with a net tax liability will claim this exemption for 2023, with over 1.5 million such claims expected. This is a simple way our current laws financially benefit families through our tax code. This bill increases that exemption from \$700 to \$1,000. The Department of Revenue estimates this change will benefit Wisconsin families \$19.5 million annually.

A child's life begins at conception. We know, too, that expenses for families begin long before birth. Under this bill, a claimant can submit proof of a heartbeat with their taxes and be eligible to claim the dependent exemption. This policy change, which acknowledges the importance of all children, is estimated by the Department of Revenue to benefit Wisconsin families \$700,000 annually.

Senate Bill 345

Pregnancy Resource Centers provide critical services such as crisis pregnancy counseling, unwed mother support, abstinence programs, care of mothers and babies, and safe haven housing. These centers have also provided post-abortion healing. There are more than 60 of these centers throughout the state, and I am proud to say that I have some great ones in my district. These Pregnancy Resource Centers are phenomenal assets to our community, open to anyone who finds themselves worried or anxious about an expected or unexpected, planned or unplanned, or wanted or unwanted pregnancy. There is already a mechanism in place to financially support these centers without any overhead costs – through the Choose Life license plate fund administered by Choose Life Wisconsin. This bill would provide an annual grant to that organization for the purposes of better supporting these amazing resource centers for even more families in the future.

Senate Bill 346

Private adoptions can cost in the tens of thousands of dollars. Families considering adoption sometimes stop the process or withdraw from consideration because they cannot afford it. This is wrong – we should continue to support all families (both birth families and adoptive families) for whom adoption is their path.

There are a few organizations in Wisconsin that offer financial assistance to adoptive families once they have reached a certain point in the process. For those curious to learn more, a list can be found at the website for the Coalition for Children, Youth & Families. Again, in an effort to reduce overhead, this bill creates a competitive grant program to be awarded to an organization already operating a financial assistance program to supplement their work.

Under the bill, families can receive up to \$10,000 to defray adoption expenses. The bill allocates \$5 million for the competitive grant program and limits the amount that can be used for administrative expenses. Furthermore, to ensure this is lifting up Wisconsin birth and adoptive families, this grant is available for Wisconsin families who are adopting Wisconsin children.

It has been a great honor and uplifting experience to work on bills that reinforce the sanctity of life and the dignity of the whole family. These bills enter a political arena fraught with deep emotions. However, I ask that you all step back from those swirling winds and examine these bills for what they represent on their own. No matter where you stand on the issue of abortion, these bills simply provide clarity and support for growing families. These bills are about mothers, children, fathers, and families. Please join me in supporting this Embrace Them Both package of bills.



KAREN HURD

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 68TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Bill 344, 345, 346
Public Testimony
Senate Licensing, Constitution and Federalism Committee
September 19, 2023

Thank you, Chair Jacque and members of the committee for holding this hearing on Senate Bills 344, 345, and 346.

The strength of Wisconsin is dependent upon the strength of its people. Long known to legislators is the importance of the family and especially the children that belong to those families. The future of Wisconsin will be shaped and guided by not only us but most importantly the children who follow us as they grow into adult Wisconsinites.

The statutes of Wisconsin clearly reflect the intent of lawmakers that have gone before us. In Chapter 765 the statute says that it is the intent of the law “to promote the stability and best interests of marriage and the family.”

SB 344 provides an income tax credit for dependent children which includes unborn children which underscores Wisconsin’s commitment to families and children. By recognizing a child in the womb as a viable person demonstrates our support of **ALL** children born and unborn.

SB 345 provides funding for pregnancy resource centers which gives parents an opportunity to learn about resources available to them. As I have walked through my life, it has been my constant observation that decisions are made without adequate knowledge. I quote Benjamin Franklin, “A nation of well-informed men who have been taught to know and prize the rights which God has given them cannot be enslaved. It is in the region of ignorance that tyranny begins.” Pregnancy resource centers help inform our people.

SB 346 establishes a grant program to provide financial assistance to prospective adoptive families. When I was campaigning for the seat which I now hold, I asked at the doors what issues were most important. Helping prospective adoptive families was one of the issues that surfaced over and over again. Adoption is a means by which we can help our children and the parents who want to increase their family through the adoptive process.

Mr. Chairman, I fully support these bills. They help make our future generations Wisconsin-strong.



Date: September 19, 2023
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
From: Dr. Leslie Abitz, Legislative Chair
Re: In opposition to Senate Bill 300, Senate Bill 343, and Senate Bill 345

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) represents over 60,000 obstetrician-gynecologists and works to improve the lives of all people seeking obstetric and gynecologic care. Access to the full spectrum of medical care, including abortion, is essential for people's health, safety, and well-being. Physicians must be able to provide medical care to people without outside interference. I write to you today on behalf of the Wisconsin Section in opposition of several proposals before the committee.

Senate Bill 300 is a serious threat to the OB/GYN residency training program at UW Health and at a time when the shortage of OB/GYNs available to serve Wisconsinites regardless of zip code is already at crisis levels. According to data from the American Medical Association nearly half of all counties in Wisconsin have only one OB/GYN or none at all and at a time when Wisconsin is seeing an increase in maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Senate Bill 300 will worsen the number of residents trained.

Senate Bill 343 is ideologically driven and uses non-medically appropriate language to codify restrictions to patients being able to access needed abortion care. WI ACOG has long affirmed that laws must not interfere with a patient's ability to be treated by a physician according to the best currently available medical evidence and the physician's professional medical judgement. There is no one-size-fits-all law that can take every individual, family, or medical conditions into account, making legislative interference in the practice of medicine incredibly dangerous. Reasons why it is not feasible to create an inclusive list of conditions that qualify as "medical emergencies" include: a patient may experience a combination of medical conditions or symptoms that, together, become life-threatening; pregnancy often exacerbates conditions or symptoms that are stable in nonpregnant individuals; patients may be lucid and appear to be in stable condition but demonstrate deteriorating health; and no single patient's condition progresses at the same pace.

Further, this legislation sets us backwards to restore meaningful access to abortion care services. Distinguishing what does and does not classify as a felony will almost certainly result in refusal and denial of appropriate medical care, and it does not center on clinicians' ability to make and act upon unique medical situations. Conflating abortion care services with murder stigmatizes lifesaving health care and defames physicians who provide critical care, and attacks people who are already suffering the loss of a wanted pregnancy. Decisions around needed reproductive medical care belong between a patient and their physician. Attempts to stipulate when, why or how a physician can provide care to their patient represents legislative interference. Patients have the right to be counseled and treated by their physician according to the best available medical evidence and their physician's professional medical judgement. Ultimately, Senate Bill 343 weakens the patient-physician relationship.

(OVER)



Senate Bill 345 would provide financial support to Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRC), also known as Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC). These organizations represent themselves as legitimate reproductive health care clinics but in fact function to dissuade people from accessing abortion. Many CPCs are not in fact medical clinics, but rather unregulated and nonmedical organizations. Staff members at these unregulated facilities have no legal obligation to provide pregnant people with accurate information and are not subject to HIPAA or required by law to maintain client confidentiality. As these Centers do not provide comprehensive care and information, WI ACOG cannot support Senate Bill 345.

In closing, on behalf of WI ACOG I proudly stand behind our members who provide comprehensive health care delivered with quality, safety, integrity, and compassion. The bills before us today create a dangerous and hostile environment for physicians and patients, and ultimately prevent doctors from providing a patient with the best possible health care. I urge you to oppose.



**Gracie Skogman, Legislative Director, Wisconsin Right to Life
Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
SB 300, SB 343, SB 344, SB 345, SB 346
Tuesday, September 19th, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Jaque and members of the committee, for your time today. My name is Gracie Skogman, and I am the Legislative Director of Wisconsin Right to Life, testifying in favor of SB 300, SB 343, SB 344, SB 345, and SB 346.

As pro-life advocates, we care deeply about protecting children and their mothers, to ensure that both are offered comprehensive care and support. Through our advocacy, we work with the many Pregnancy Resource Centers in our state that provide medical care and support to women during pregnancy and beyond, often meeting women in their moments of most need. We also hear firsthand from potential adoptive parents, regarding the financial struggles they may face when hoping to adopt.

Women in Wisconsin are deserving of comprehensive support and resources through pregnancy and beyond, and this legislation takes another step towards achieving that goal. Additionally, families in our state who are looking to adopt or would like to choose life for their children deserve to be fully supported. This is fundamental to creating a culture of life in our state.

Additionally, this bill package provides necessary clarity that medically necessary and lifesaving procedures, such as treatment for an ectopic pregnancy, do not constitute an abortion. In a culture that increasingly refers to abortion as "healthcare," it is a vital reminder that abortion is the opposite, as healthcare is focused on the saving of life, and abortion takes innocent human life.

Wisconsin Right to Life urge support of this legislation, to further create a culture of life and support for both preborn children and mothers in our state.

Thank you very much for your time,
Gracie Skogman



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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 345

PUBLIC HEARING – COMMITTEE ON LICENSING, CONSTITUTION AND FEDERALISM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

JACK HOOGENDYK, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DIRECTOR

WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION

Thank you, Chairman Jacque and committee members, for the opportunity to testify regarding Senate Bill 345. I am Jack Hoogendyk, Legislative and Policy Director for Wisconsin Family Action. Wisconsin Family Action supports Senate Bill 345.

SB 345 provides funding for Wisconsin's pregnancy care centers through the already established Choose Life Wisconsin, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Wisconsin corporation that was begun for the specific purpose of receiving funds from the sale of the Choose Life Wisconsin license plate. The plate was first made available in October 2017, and funds from the sale of the plate began in May 2018. Since May 2018, nearly \$300,000 has been distributed to over 30 Wisconsin pregnancy care centers in the form of grants. Every penny of the funds that have come to Choose Life Wisconsin from the sale of the license plates has gone to the centers. Wisconsin Family Council and Pro-Life Wisconsin underwrite all of Choose Life Wisconsin's overhead in order to ensure that can happen.

Choose Life Wisconsin has an impeccable record of awarding and tracking grants and keeping overhead and administrative costs covered by these other organizations. SB 345 provides for the Department of Health Services to grant to Choose Life Wisconsin \$1,000,000 per fiscal year that Choose Life Wisconsin would then distribute to qualified pregnancy care centers in amounts not to exceed \$50,000 per center. The bill also provides for appropriate reporting on the distributions. The organizations covering Choose Life Wisconsin overhead and administrative costs have no plans to stop doing that, which means every penny that Choose Life Wisconsin receives from DHS would go to these incredibly efficient, life-saving centers that are all around our state to help them help women in crisis pregnancies.

Here is the reality of what the majority of these amazing centers provide. Young women experiencing pregnancy often find many challenges to bringing a new life into the world. Many of these women do not have the financial resources to access the things they need to deliver a healthy baby. Providing tangible assistance to young parents is essential. That assistance can be provided by the state taxpayers, and much is done through Badger Care, for example. But, many of the needs of pregnant women and their partners are being met by private, non-profit organizations.

A shining example of this are the pregnancy resource centers, also known as pregnancy help centers, located throughout the state. There are over 55 such centers in Wisconsin. Virtually all of them are funded by private sources. They provide their services to whoever needs them and do so at zero cost to their clients.

Most of these centers are medical in nature and have been federally recognized and qualified as "reproductive health care providers." They provide pregnancy tests, ob. ultrasounds and STD tests, administered by trained registered nurses under the oversight of a licensed medical director. They are also voluntarily HIPAA compliant. The results for the clients and the taxpayers have been stunning.

In a 2019 comprehensive survey of just 23 of these 55 centers in Wisconsin, the following information was compiled:

- They provided services and materials valued at more than \$1.3 million, including
 - \$368,519 in medical services, *i.e.*, pregnancy tests, ob. ultrasounds and STD tests
 - \$540,520 in family services including
 - Free consultation
 - Free sexual risk avoidance presentations
 - Free parenting education sessions
 - \$128,256 in material items including diapers, baby wipes, car seats, strollers and baby clothing
- These 23 centers have over 115 staff, 25% of whom are licensed medical professionals, 400 volunteers, 15% of whom are licensed medical professionals.

Every dollar of the \$1.3 million in services these centers provided would have been borne by the clients themselves, many of whom do not have financial resources, or by the taxpayers of Wisconsin.

This legislation will not only serve to promote and support growing young families, it will also help new moms and dads be prepared physically and emotionally for the birth and proper care of their newborn child.

For these above stated reasons, we strongly support the passage of SB 345. Thank you.



ProLife
LOVE. FOR LIFE. WI.

**Testimony in Support of SB 343, SB 344, SB 345, & SB 346 (Embrace Them Both)
Senate Committee on Licensing, Constitution and Federalism
By Matt Sande, Director of Legislation**

September 19, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Jacque and Committee members. My name is Matt Sande and I serve as director of legislation for Pro-Life Wisconsin. Thank you for this opportunity to express our support of a comprehensive bill package, entitled *Embrace Them Both*, that protects and supports pregnant mothers and their preborn children.

Pro-Life Wisconsin is proud to advocate for these bills that, together, maintain and strengthen our current law abortion ban and provide the necessary resources for both moms and babies to survive and thrive in a post-Roe Wisconsin. We thank Senator Quinn and Assembly co-authors Gae Magnafici, Amanda Nedweski, Donna Rozar, and Patrick Snyder for their vision and compassion in introducing this life-affirming bill package.

Growing Wisconsin's population and finding ways to attract and keep talent in the state to increase the tax base is a bipartisan concern. Abortion will always have the effect of decreasing the population. This legislation provides attractive incentives for families to not only choose life but to choose Wisconsin as a state that protects human life and encourages the growth of healthy families.

The *Embrace Them Both* legislation does the following:

Senate Bill 343 (Quinn/Magnafici) clarifies that medical procedures intended to save the life of a pregnant mother, and not intended to kill her preborn baby, are not abortions. Such procedures include medical emergency early induction or C-section, removal of a miscarriage, or removal of an ectopic, molar, or anembryonic pregnancy. Abortion, statutorily defined as the *intentional* killing of a preborn living human being, is never medically necessary to save the life or improve the health of the mother.

To be clear, Wisconsin's statutory definitions of abortion center on the intention of the actor. Wisconsin Statute 940.04 reads "Any person, other than the mother, who *intentionally* destroys the life of an unborn child is guilty of a Class H felony." And as described in Wisconsin Statute 253.10(2)(a), "abortion" means "the use of an instrument, medicine, drug or other substance or device with intent to terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant or for whom there is reason to believe that she may be pregnant and *with intent other than to increase the probability of a live birth*, to preserve the life or health of the infant after live birth or to remove a dead fetus."

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However, following the U.S Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs* in June 2022, much confusion has ensued about what medical procedures are permitted or proscribed under our current abortion ban. Wisconsin Statute 940.04 contains a massive loophole – a broad and undefined “life-of-the-mother” exception – through which to drive abortion on demand. The term “therapeutic abortion” in the statute is not defined.

Senate 343 provides definitional clarity in Wisconsin abortion law. In s.940.04, it does so by eliminating the therapeutic abortion exception and specifying that the statute’s abortion prohibitions do not apply to a physician’s performance of a medical procedure or treatment designed or intended to prevent the death of a pregnant woman and not designed or intended to kill her unborn child, which results in injury to or death of the woman’s unborn child when the physician makes reasonable medical efforts under the circumstances to preserve both the life of the woman and the life of her unborn child in a manner consistent with conventional medical practice. Under the bill, such medical procedures or treatments immune from prosecution include an early induction or cesarean section performed due to a medical emergency or the removal of a miscarriage or an ectopic, anembryonic, or molar pregnancy.

Senate Bill 343 provides the same definitional clarification in s.253.10(2)(a), a definition of abortion used in numerous Wisconsin abortion regulations over the last thirty years, including our voluntary and informed consent for abortion law, prohibitions on funding for abortion-related activities, limitations on the prescription and use of abortion-inducing drugs, and our 20-week abortion ban.

Equal care for mother and unborn baby in a health emergency is the antithesis of intentionally killing a preborn, living human being. Medical emergency early inductions and cesarean sections seek to *separate* baby from mom in a concerted effort to save both lives. They are not legal abortions. Removal of a miscarriage, or the loss of an unborn baby before 24 weeks gestation, is not an abortion. Sadly, and obviously, the preborn baby is already dead. Removal of an ectopic pregnancy, where a fertilized ovum lodges in the fallopian tube and grows there, is not an abortion. The damaged portion of the tube containing the embryonic baby may be removed where it is clearly necessary to prevent rupture and save the mother’s life. Such an operation is justified by the principle of double effect, because the death of the child is an unintended effect of an operation independently justified to save the mother’s life. It does not involve the intentional killing of an unborn child. Someday, medical science may be capable of transferring the embedded embryo directly into the uterine wall.

Legally, the above-described medical operations are not considered abortions and have never been prosecuted in this country, even when the mother’s life was not immediately threatened. But to remove *any* doubt, Senate Bill 343 is needed, and we strongly support its passage. Physicians must make their best effort to save both patients, giving equal care to mother and child. We are fortunate to have with us today medical experts in the field of obstetrics who will help us better understand the difference between intentional killing and equal care.

I would like to share some quotes from the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG) concerning abortion and the mother’s life:

Abortion is the purposeful killing of the unborn in the termination of a pregnancy. AAPLOG opposes abortion. When extreme medical emergencies that threaten the life of the mother arise (chorioamnionitis or HELLP syndrome could be examples), AAPLOG believes in “treatment to save the mother’s life,” including premature delivery if that is indicated — obviously with the patient’s informed consent. This is NOT “abortion to save the mother’s life.” We are treating two patients, the mother and the baby, and every reasonable attempt to save the baby’s life would also be a part of our medical intervention. We acknowledge that, in some such instances, the baby would be too premature to survive.

[\(https://aaplog.org/what-is-aaplogs-position-on-abortion-to-save-the-life-of-the-mother/\)](https://aaplog.org/what-is-aaplogs-position-on-abortion-to-save-the-life-of-the-mother/)

AAPLOG urges its colleagues in Obstetrics and Gynecology to cultivate a life-affirming practice of the specialty, in which both the maternal and fetal patients are treated with human dignity and respect. [...] Elective induced abortions (performed purely for family planning) are medically unnecessary, because of their elective nature. However, maternal-fetal separation may be offered ethically in circumstances of maternal life or health endangerment, if that threat is proportional to the peril faced by the fetus or neonate at birth.

AAPLOG recognizes that there are certain serious maternal medical conditions which worsen in pregnancy [...] In the rare circumstances where maternal and fetal risk are proportionate, AAPLOG supports several ways of iatrogenically ending pregnancy. These ways largely include induction and cesarean section, which do not dismember the fetus. When maternal-fetal separation occurs in the setting of expected neonatal death, comfort care can and should be employed for the neonate born alive.

AAPLOG expresses significant concern with the inappropriate overuse of ‘maternal health’ when the true reason for the termination of pregnancy is psychosocial stress, fear of consequences of pregnancy, discomforts of pregnancy, lifestyle changes required by pregnancy, or pure autonomy. This is not medical necessity; rather, it is assertion of one human organism’s power over another because of social problems that should be addressed in other ways.

[\(AAPLOG Practice Guideline, Number 10, pages 10,11, August 2022\)](#)

Which leads us to the remaining three bills in the *Embrace Them Both* package that, in a very practical, meaningful, and life-affirming way, work to mitigate social problems that tempt fathers and mothers to procure abortions. The bills do so by assisting pregnant mothers financially, medically, educationally, socially, emotionally, and materially. Importantly, the bills are a hand up, not a handout and will go far towards helping growing families achieve stability and self-sufficiency.

Senate Bill 344 (Quinn/Snyder) increases the current state income tax exemption for dependents from \$700 to \$1,000 and extends the coverage to preborn children whose fetal heartbeat has been detected. Designating the preborn child as a “dependent” provides substantial tax savings to growing families and recognizes him/her as a human “person” deserving of public benefits. The tax exemption may not be claimed for a pregnancy that ends in abortion, as defined in s.253.10(2)(a).

Senate Bill 345 (Quinn/Nedweski) requires the Department of Health Services to award an ongoing \$1 million annual grant to Choose Life Wisconsin, Inc. to assist the non-profit organization in providing grants to pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) across Wisconsin. Since 2017, "Choose Life" specialty license plates have been available to Wisconsin motorists. With over 2,375 of these plates on cars in Wisconsin, sales have resulted in over \$275,000 being granted to over twenty-five Wisconsin PRCs in five years. We have with us today a long-time executive director of a PRC in southeastern Wisconsin who will describe the multitude of benefits her organization provides to vulnerable mothers and fathers, including free pregnancy tests and ultrasounds, prenatal and parenting classes, STD testing and education, family planning and education, pregnancy counseling, adoption support, abortion pill reversal, and miscarriage and stillbirth support.

In partnership with our statewide pregnancy resource centers, Pro-Life Wisconsin compassionately listens to women and assists them in navigating pregnancy, parenting, and adoption. We reject the lie that abortion is a legitimate solution and offer ways to assist moms in their most immediate need. The demand for pre-natal and post-natal care is high, and we need to meet that demand by supporting and growing Wisconsin's statewide network of pregnancy resource centers and even expanding their role to include the full range of medical care for pregnant women. Senate Bill 345 will substantially aid in this effort.

Senate Bill 346 (Quinn/Rozar) requires the Department of Children and Families to administer a competitive grant program that provides \$5 million biennially to an adoption organization that provides financial assistance to parents seeking adoptions. The costs of adoption can create a chasm that is unbridgeable between children who need families and the families who want them so desperately. The creation of this grant program will open the door of opportunity for children and families in a new way. With the average cost of a private adoption exceeding \$40,000, we must do more, publicly and privately, to make adoption affordable for families. Assisting prospective adoptive parents with a \$10,000 award will help many on the financial fence move forward with this loving gift.

In sum, *Embrace Them Both* provides real solutions for Wisconsin women and families. Pro-Life Wisconsin is urging the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly to pass the *Embrace Them Both* bill package as we work to build a culture of life and true prosperity in Wisconsin. We encourage Committee members to recommend Senate Bills 343, 344, 345, and 346 to the full Senate. Again, thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions committee members may have for me.