



Testimony of Denise Burke, Esq.
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Chairman Kessler and Members of the Committee, I am Denise Burke, Senior Counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom. ADF is the nation's leading nonprofit legal organization that advocates for religious liberty, free speech, life, and marriage and the family. We regularly analyze proposed laws and their effect on constitutional freedoms.

House Bill (HB) 2635 protects pregnancy centers from censorship and discrimination simply because they do not offer, refer for, or counsel in favor of abortion, abortion-inducing drugs, or contraception. It prevents them from being singled out for censorship or discriminatory treatment simply because of their pro-life principles.

Kansas's pregnancy centers are critical and under-appreciated resources that provide compassionate care and practical help to women and their families. They provide care, support, and education that improve maternal, child, and family health at no cost to taxpayers or to the women and families they serve.

According to a 2023 Knights of Columbus–Marist Poll, 91% of Americans support the work of pregnancy centers.

Unfortunately, pregnancy centers are all too often being attacked rather than affirmed in their mission. States and municipalities are increasingly considering legislation and ordinances seeking to, for example, restrict the fundamental First Amendment rights of pregnancy centers, to force them to interview and hire those who do not share their pro-life values, and to effectively undermine the positive impact of pregnancy centers on women, babies, families, and our communities.

The number of state and local government officials assailing the life-saving work of pregnancy centers has grown exponentially over the past few years as the legal and political landscape surrounding abortion has shifted. Notably, since 2022, at least 23 state legislatures¹ have introduced measures that would undermine pregnancy centers' autonomy and life-affirming work, and 5 have enacted such measures.² By comparison, in 2021, just one year prior to the Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, only two states considered such measures.

The threat is also growing at the local level. Cities, including Columbus (OH), Pittsburgh, Cambridge (MA), New York City, and Seattle, have adopted or considered measures targeting the free speech and association rights of pregnancy centers.

Conversely, two states maintain laws protecting pregnancy centers from discrimination and censorship: Missouri and Montana.

The goals of HB 2635 are simple. It protects pregnancy centers from discrimination. It ensures that they cannot be prohibited from providing pregnancy-related care, counseling services, or any other service related to pregnancy and postpartum care simply because they do not perform, counsel in favor of, or provide referrals for abortion, abortion-inducing drugs, or contraception. It protects their rights of free expression and free association—rights guaranteed by both the U.S. and Kansas constitutions.

HB 2635 allows Kansas to be proactive in protecting the critical work of pregnancy centers and ensuring that women have the choice and opportunity to access the care, material support, and educational options they offer both now and in the future.

¹ Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Vermont.

² California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, and Vermont.