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Subject: Action Alert: Pregnancy Resource Centers Attacked

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Today, NARAL ProChoice Virginia Foundation held a press conference to announce legislation (SB 188 and HB 452) that seeks to remove the funding stream available to Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRCs) from the purchase of "Choose Life" license plates. This harmful legislation seeks to require a new state regulation of all PRCs, including the following stipulations:

- Placement of a sign on the outside of the center stating, "that it does not perform or refer women for abortions, that it does not provide or refer women for contraception, and that the facility is not required to maintain medical confidentiality or medical records in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)."
- Collection by the state of all materials distributed at the center.
- Signature by a center's board member stating that they comply with "all aspects of Heartbeat International, Inc.'s 'Commitment of Care' and that the center provides only factually and medically accurate information about pregnancy, contraception, and abortion to a person seeking counseling, information, or assistance from the center."

Violation of these accuracy policies by any employee or even a volunteer is subject to a civil penalty.

In announcing the legislation patroned by Senator Ralph Northam (D-6, Norfolk) and Delegate Charniele Herring (D-46, Alexandria), NARAL released a year-long study "revealing the misinformation and deception" of these centers. Among the study's claims:

- **PRCs rely on deceptive advertising.** The example given is of "highly visible" billboards on "well traveled roads" with text such as, "Pregnant? Scared? Need Help? Call us!" Apparently these signs "incite a potential client to call" because they misconstrue it to be a so-called "comprehensive reproductive health care clinic." In case you are wondering, this deceptive advertising of centers can also be found in the yellow pages when you find these centers under "Abortion Alternatives."
- **Evasive Phone Conversations:** The report claims that "If a young woman facing an unintended pregnancy did not know to ask, she would not be told the limits of the CPC's services."
- **Appearance as Medical Clinics:** According to the report, "The center looked like a small doctor's office. There was a waiting room . . . an office with a glass check-in window. In the bathroom, there was a place to put my urine sample in the wall like at my doctor's office. . . The ultrasound room looked like a room at my gynecologist's office."

- **Lacks Confidentiality:** PRCs are not required by law to abide by federal standards of confidentiality (HIPAA), but in fact they voluntarily do. This report calls out the fact that some centers provide literature that does plainly states that if you are a minor, "the center may give certain information to parents or guardians." Imagine that, including parents in the decision. I thought that was actually the law of Virginia!
- **Medically Inaccurate Information:** During today's press conference, Sen. Northam (a medical doctor) highlighted the fact that centers were found to mention a link between abortion and breast cancer that does not exist. This is an area of serious medical debate. Just last year a study was published in a prestigious, peer reviewed medical journal containing an admission from U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) researcher Louise Brinton and her colleagues that in fact abortion raises breast cancer risk by 40%.^{[1][1]} Dr. Northam is not apparently keeping up with the medical literature.
- **Other claims in the study,** "CPCs use the ploy of a medical ultrasound to show a woman a fetus and execute an emotional appeal, despite it being an unnecessary medical procedure."

As I told the media today in response to NARAL's fallacious claims, Virginia's lucrative abortion industry is watching women make a different choice than they want them to make and it's eating into their profits. This new legislation is nothing more than an attempt to scare women from making a choice different than abortion. PRCs have assisted thousands of women in Virginia through crisis pregnancies and not a single woman has ever died. Virginia's abortion clinics cannot say the same.

The Family Foundation will be the guardian of these centers who faithfully try to serve women in need but we need your help. In a few short days, I will provide another update on this legislation as it moves into committee. I will need you to call your legislator to tell them about the wonderful work PRCs do.

Right now, I need you to do something else. Please show your support of these centers as they face an unwarranted battle in the political arena. Would you consider doing one of the following two things today: a) purchase a Choose Life Plate, \$15 of which will fund these centers or b) call the PRC near you and thank them for their service. If you are able, consider financially supporting them. You can imagine, due to the high costs of operating The Family Foundation, I rarely make appeals on behalf of other organizations, but the work they do is tireless and while the political battle is critical the front lines cannot be under-resourced.

Finally, if you have been helped by a PRC or you know of someone who benefited from their work, would you consider joining The Family Foundation in defeating this legislation? Would you testify or at least meet with a legislator? If so, please contact our office immediately (804) 343-0010.