



Victoria Cobb, President

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Victory Alert: PRCs Victorious in Tonight's Subcommittees

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The Family Foundation has been keeping you informed over the past two weeks about the anti Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) bills and I'm thrilled to inform you that by God's grace, both the House (HB 452) and Senate (SB 188) versions of this legislation were killed in subcommittee late today! This was the best possible outcome we could have ever imagined.

Patroned by Delegate Charniele Herring (D-26, Alexandria) in the House and Senator Ralph Northam (D-6, Norfolk) in the Senate, these bills (a top legislative priority of NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia) would have required PRCs amongst other requirements to put a sign on their door that essentially says they are not health care facilities and don't provide abortions or contraception. The legislation would have also forced PRCs to abide by regulations created by the Department of Health. Beyond unwarranted burdensome regulations, this bill would have also removed PRCs that have medical practitioners on staff from being eligible for proceeds generated by Choose Life plates, essentially punishing those centers that go the extra mile to provide free ultrasounds to their patients.

The afternoon began in the Senate Education and Health, Health Care subcommittee. Senator Northam, also the subcommittee's chairman, introduced the bill, followed by

testimony from Dr. Wendy Klein (a conference chair for The VCU Institute of Women's Health) who gave an overview of NARAL's recently released "investigation" of Virginia PRCs, Tarina Keene (NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia), and Jessica Honke (Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia). All three claimed that PRCs presented "medically inaccurate" information and that they intimidated women into making a decision without giving her all the options.

Next up was the opposition. What followed was an amazing testament to the work done by Virginia PRCs. With one day's notice, the room was packed with opposition to the bill ranging from The Family Foundation, Virginia Catholic Conference, and Virginia Assembly of Independent Baptists to PRC directors, PRC volunteers, a representative from the national CareNet organization, and perhaps most compelling, past PRC clients. Statistics and stories were presented and one after another, the NARAL fabrication began to unravel. Asking some revealing questions, subcommittee member Senator Steve Newman (R-23, Lynchburg) did an excellent job of helping to unpack the illogical premise that a marketplace competitor to PRCs (Planned Parenthood and its advocacy organization NARAL) could do an unbiased, scientifically valid investigation of PRCs, which when effective, provide abortion alternatives reducing Planned Parenthood's revenue.

Realizing there was nothing he could do to stop the embarrassing defeat of his bill in his own subcommittee and recognizing the concerns over the study, Senator Northam made a shocking, but honorable motion to pass by his bill for this year. Senator Newman seconded the motion and the bill was unanimously defeated.

Nighttime fast approaching, both the support and opposition for SB 188 relocated to the House Health, Welfare, and Institutions subcommittee room to hear HB 452. Despite being defeated just minutes ago in the Senate subcommittee, the anti-PRC delegation held fast to their already debunked arguments about medical inaccuracy and intimidation. The Virginia Catholic Conference and myself gave testimony speaking to the policy side of the bill followed by a compelling appeal on behalf of Virginia's PRCs by Richmond PRC Director, Kim Warburton, and lastly touching testimony from two previous clients, one of whom is now a PRC volunteer. Finally, Kristen Hansen of CareNet emphasized the high standards of medical excellence held by national organizations overseeing these PRCs.

Delegates Bobby Orrock (R- 54, Thornburg), Jimmie Massie (R-72, Richmond) and Chris Stolle (R-83, Virginia Beach) further ensured the demise of this bill by their detailed questioning of both the patron and Dr. Klein. Delegate (and Doctor) Stolle challenged Dr. Klein to "put on her science cap" and to answer whether she considered the NARAL report to be findings academically solid. Stammering to truthfully answer his question without giving away the gaping holes in NARAL's report, Dr. Klein hemmed and hawed and then somewhat conceded that NARAL's report was not the golden standard NARAL would have it made out to be. A motion was made by Delegate Massie to pass the bill by indefinitely and HB 452 died in a party line vote of 4-3.

Visit our [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) later tomorrow to view video of this moving testimony and joyous defeat!

And thank you to all who spoke to your legislators, provided testimony, and who prayed for those involved as this battle raged in the General Assembly tonight. Because of your support, Pregnancy Resource Centers will be allowed to continue their compassionate work of providing services and support to families in crisis and receive additional funding through

the continued purchase of Choose Life license plates.

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