

STATUE OF LIBERTY

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to address the House for one minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I issued a challenge yesterday to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to stop lying and be honest about what they actually mean when they are talking about changes to our immigration system and at the border, and it looks like they are taking my advice.

Let's look at this board. We have a fellow Floridian on the record saying she wants family separation. Seems like a nice sentiment coming from someone who is a new mother.

We have our infamous colleague from Georgia saying that she can't wait for mass deportations to start on day one of the Trump administration.

Then we also have the criminally indicted former President himself saying that he wants to scrap birthright U.S. citizenship.

I want to remind everybody that the promise of this country, the promise written on the Statue of Liberty, is one that welcomes all folks who are most vulnerable with open arms; like my mother did when she came here from Cuba as a refugee and asylum seeker.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans in the House need to stop lying to the American people. If you don't believe in the promise of this country or in our values, you don't believe in the beacon of hope that is the Statue of Liberty.

SUPPORTING ORPHAN WELL GRANTS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for one minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill, the Orphan Well Grant Flexibility Act.

We all know that abandoned wells, either unplugged or improperly plugged, can pose serious environmental and health risks to surrounding communities. In Pennsylvania alone, there are more than 27,000 documented abandoned and orphaned oil and gas wells across the State.

It is not just a Pennsylvania issue, however, as abandoned wells are found across the country. The Orphan Well Grant Flexibility Act, which I introduced alongside my colleague Congressman DELUZIO from Pennsylvania, will empower States to maximize their flexibility when plugging abandoned oil wells and cut red tape to accelerate environmental rehabilitation.

We have many of the resources we need to plug these wells, and now it is our job to ensure that they are able to be used for their intended purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman DELUZIO for joining me in leading this critical effort, and I encourage all of

my colleagues to support this legislation.

□ 1215

CONGRATULATING DETROIT LIONS AND QB JARED GOFF

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, as a proud southern Californian, I rise to congratulate my good friend, Representative KILDEE from Michigan, on the hard-fought victory last Sunday by his beloved Detroit Lions against the Los Angeles Rams, 24-23.

Before the game, I had agreed with Representative KILDEE that should the Lions beat the Rams, I would be happy to publicly congratulate the good people of Michigan, who have been waiting more than three decades for a Lions playoff win, as well as Lions starting quarterback Jared Goff, who is a product, I might add, of the University of California, where he played from 2013 to 2015.

After his college career, Goff was then drafted by the Rams with the first overall pick in 2016, after which he took us to the Super Bowl in 2018.

While it pains me that Representative KILDEE is not here praising Rams quarterback and 2021 Super Bowl champion Matthew Stafford right now, I genuinely wish Goff, the Lions, and all of my friends in Michigan great success in the weeks ahead.

KFIR'S FIRST BIRTHDAY SPENT AS HAMAS' HOSTAGE

(Mr. BERGMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Kfir Bibas, whose first birthday is today. Instead of spending it in the embrace of his family, Kfir is at the mercy of some of the world's most vile terrorists.

Along with his 4-year-old brother and parents, the sweet redheaded boy became the youngest of more than 240 hostages who were brutally kidnapped by evil Hamas militants on October 7.

In such desperate times, I am reminded of the promises of our Almighty God, particularly those which set apart our children as the apple of His eye.

Mark 9:42 tells us: "If anyone causes one of these little ones . . . to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea."

So sayeth Mark.

Today, I demand that these reprehensible animals release Kfir immediately, along with all the remaining hostages.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues and fellow Americans to stand with Kfir and Israel and to pray for peace.

ASSAULT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONTINUES

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in the last 1½ years, we have seen the horrific impact of overturning the right to an abortion, and the assault continues.

The Supreme Court just announced that it would be hearing a challenge to the Biden administration's policy that abortion remains a form of emergency treatment for women whose lives are at risk.

This was done to ensure that even in States that have draconian abortion bans, doctors are able to provide needed emergency medical care.

It is unconscionable that doctors are calling their lawyers while patients are dying on the operating table.

Too often the so-called pregnancy crisis centers are a sham that peddle misinformation, and they certainly shouldn't be eligible for Federal dollars meant to help people in need.

Why are we wasting our time on culture wars instead of policies that actually help American families?

This is a disservice to the American people, and I urge my colleagues to reject this legislation.

SUPPORTING PREGNANT AND PARENTING WOMEN AND FAMILIES ACT

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 969, I call up the bill (H.R. 6918) to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from restricting funding for pregnancy centers, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). Pursuant to House Resolution 969, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 118-20 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 6918

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PREGNANCY CENTERS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may not finalize, implement, or enforce, with respect to expenditures for any pregnancy center, the modification to section 263.11 of title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, as described in the proposed regulation set forth beginning on page 67697 of volume 88 of the Federal Register, or any substantially similar regulatory action.

(b) *DEFINITION OF PREGNANCY CENTER.*—In subsection (a), the term "pregnancy center" means any organization, such as a pregnancy resource center, pregnancy help center or organization, or pregnancy medical center, that—

(1) supports protecting the life of the mother and the unborn child; and

(2) offers resources and services to mothers, fathers, and families, including but not limited to relationship counseling, prenatal and pregnancy education, pregnancy testing, diapers, baby clothes, or material supports.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, right after the Dobbs Supreme Court decision, nearly 100 pregnancy resource centers, pro-life organizations, and churches were smashed, ransacked, vandalized, graffitied, and even firebombed. While the violence has subsided, pregnancy resource centers around the country are still under attack, this time by the Biden administration.

Last year, the Biden administration proposed a rule at the Department of Health and Human Services that blocks States from funding pregnancy resource centers through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant program.

These centers exist to provide care and support for pregnant women looking for an alternative to abortion. Mothers can receive help for themselves and the health of their unborn child, including everything from diapers and prenatal vitamins to transportation and parenting classes.

The Biden administration's proposed rule has the potential to impact over 2,700 such centers around the country that in 2019 alone provided medical and material support to over 2 million women and families.

Nothing in the bipartisan law that created TANF gives the Biden administration the authority to unfairly target pregnancy resource centers. In fact, it prohibits the government from restricting TANF funds, yet that is exactly what the Biden administration is trying to do.

This funding is critical to keeping the doors open and providing care for women seeking help. For example, in my home State of Missouri, TANF provides \$3 of every \$4 the State provides to pregnancy resource centers, where

expectant moms can get everything from diapers and food to transportation, parenting skills classes, and prenatal care. These are services that every single expectant mother needs for a healthy pregnancy, and pregnancy resource centers have stepped in to fill these basic needs.

The hypocrisy on the part of the Biden administration could not be more clear. They claim to support a woman's right to choose her own healthcare while at the same time the President is making it harder for moms to choose life for their unborn child so his administration can funnel even more resources to organizations like Planned Parenthood. If this rule takes effect, pregnant women in America will have fewer healthcare options and less access to care.

As tomorrow's March for Life will remind us all, the rights of mothers and the unborn must be protected.

I thank Representative FISCHBACH for introducing this bill that would end the Biden administration's misguided rule targeting pregnancy resource centers and for her unwavering support of women and the unborn. I also thank Representatives TENNEY and CHRIS SMITH for cosponsoring the bill and for their leadership on this issue. Each one has been a tireless fighter to advance the right to life for decades.

I hope that each one of my colleagues will support this legislation, stand up for mothers, and protect the right to life.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, the majority is pushing yet another extreme anti-choice bill just in time for the big antiwoman rally in Washington this weekend.

Rather than helping hardworking American families, Republicans are working to divert Federal funds from needy children in order to serve their own extremist agenda that is out of step with the majority of Americans.

Republicans are attempting to funnel more Federal funds into dangerous anti-abortion facilities, the so-called pregnancy centers. The other side doesn't even dispute that these centers have a specific agenda: to do everything they can within their power to coerce women into doing what the center thinks is best for the women, not what is in the best interest of the mother.

These so-called crisis pregnancy centers provide deceptive and inaccurate information to pregnant women.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program is intended to help low-income women and families, not to reduce abortions. This funding was not intended to bankroll deceptive anti-abortion centers that misrepresent themselves as healthcare facilities. These facilities often delay access to care, and they use emotional manipulation to divert access to care from licensed medical professionals.

The American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and even the National Institutes of Health have all issued reports citing numerous ethical and medical concerns with these so-called centers.

These facilities are unregulated. They have no legal obligation to provide pregnant people with accurate information. They are not subject to HIPAA protections, nor are they required by law to maintain client confidentiality. In many cases, they don't even have licensed medical professionals on staff.

One woman who sought out care at a Florida women's health center in Jacksonville was told that having an abortion would cause breast cancer. This is patently false. Another was advised to relax at the beach after being incorrectly informed she was carrying an ectopic pregnancy.

These facilities are unsafe. Multiple physician organizations have stated that they are unethical. The bottom line is that anti-abortion clinics should not receive Federal dollars to continue spreading false information to low-income, often minority, women seeking comprehensive, nonjudgmental fact- and science-based reproductive healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. FISCHBACH), who is the sponsor of this legislation.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair for the opportunity to say a few words.

Mr. Speaker, this administration and my colleagues on the left claim that they want to give pregnant women every option. If that were true, then they would have no problem with this bill.

The fact is the left is only interested in funding avenues that encourage women to have abortions. This line of thinking belittles the abilities of women to make informed decisions across the country.

Unfortunately for women everywhere, the left is shouting lies and inaccuracies at the top of their lungs, calling pregnancy centers a scam. These people clearly have not been to a pregnancy center. I have been to many.

The fact is pregnancy centers empower women. Take, for example, Kristen in Louisiana. She thought her pregnancy was the end of the world. She contacted her local pregnancy center, sharing her concerns about single parenting, including physical, emotional, and financial concerns. She was so relieved to work with a team that was "confidential and nonjudgmental every step of the way." They informed her of all the resources available to her, including free Lamaze and parenting classes and even scholarships.

She would never have known about all of these resources available to her had she not gone to a pregnancy center

that was committed to empowering her with the knowledge, information, and support she needed to feel confident in choosing life.

Today, nobody could imagine their lives without Kristen's daughter. Since working with her local pregnancy center, she has gotten married. Her husband adopted her daughter, and the two went on to have more children together. Kristen graduated college, got her master's degree, is a professor, and is applying to the Ph.D. programs.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, conservatives are here for unborn babies and their mothers. I introduced the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act to ensure the administration does not block funding for pregnancy care centers across the country like the one that helped Kristen. They are providing support and empowering women to raise their families.

□ 1230

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will point out that one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle mentioned some violence, and I will talk about the violence that happens at abortion provider clinics.

They have been compiling statistics on instances of violence and disruption against abortion providers for more than 40 years, and there is definite uptick in the amount of clinic invasions, obstructions, blockades, targeted mail, and harassing phone calls.

In recent years, we have seen incidents of violence with devastating impacts. For example, in November 2015, three people were murdered and nine injured when Robert Dear brought an assault-style rifle to a Planned Parenthood healthcare center in Colorado Springs and opened fire.

A gunman also attacked a Planned Parenthood clinic in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the early hours of January 22, 2021. In December 2021, the same clinic was burned to the ground by arsonists.

If you want to talk about incidents of violence, let's talk about the onslaught of violent attacks that abortion providers have had to deal with for over the past 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU), my colleague on the Ways and Means Committee and a champion for women's rights.

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 6918, the deceptively named Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act.

This bill has a simple but negative purpose: It would divert Temporary Assistance for Needy Families dollars that successfully keep needy children and families from poverty to anti-abortion centers.

These so-called crisis pregnancy centers masquerade as healthcare facilities, even going so far as to have staff

dress in scrubs and white coats to mimic medical professionals.

Let's be clear: They are organizations attempting to strong-arm, manipulate, and coerce pregnant people seeking abortion care into carrying pregnancies to full term, and this is to the great disadvantage of women in need.

These anti-abortion centers are not actual medical facilities, so they are not covered by the privacy and security rules of HIPAA. With little or no consequence, staff at these facilities can lie to patients and share their personal information with anti-abortion extremists in order to survey, harass, pressure, or prosecute those seeking abortion care.

The lies these centers tell can have profound impacts on a patient's health. In Iowa, an OB/GYN has seen patients who were told at these centers that using contraceptives was the same as having an abortion.

In Massachusetts, an unqualified staff member at an anti-abortion center failed to diagnose a woman's ectopic pregnancy. That woman later required emergency surgery. Worst of all, there are no consequences to these centers for this.

A recent study of 607 anti-abortion centers across nine States found that they "promoted patently false and/or biased medical claims about pregnancy, abortion, contraception, and reproductive healthcare providers." Fewer than half of these centers reported having a licensed medical professional on staff.

Unfortunately for the American people, spreading misinformation about abortion and ultimately implementing a national ban on abortion seems to be unifying objectives for Republicans here in Congress.

During our markup last week, Democrats offered a series of amendments to allow funding to these centers if they could prove that they provide medically accurate information, not harm women's health, and did not mislead or coerce women into visiting their centers.

Committee Republicans rejected all of those amendments, making it clear that their purpose is coercive propaganda, not support for pregnant women.

If Republicans want to support expecting new parents, House Democrats would welcome their backing of a fully expanded child tax credit, universal paid family and medical leave, and affordable childcare.

However, instead of considering these measures or even doing the basic business of keeping the government open, we are debating a bill going nowhere in the Senate and intended, instead, to score political points with anti-abortion groups gathering in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 6918.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE).

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of legislation introduced by my good friend from Minnesota, a strong voice for the voiceless, Mrs. FISCHBACH.

The Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Families Act blocks a disastrous rule proposed by the Biden administration which would strip funding from pregnancy resource centers.

As we heard in last week's markup, those who oppose this bill have even admitted that they are pro-life starting only 2 seconds after you are born.

Ironically, so many on the other side of the aisle, most of whom can't even define what a woman is, not only share in this delusion, but also claim to be the party of women's rights.

Now, I am sorry. We just heard that these centers are masquerading as women's healthcare facilities. You want to talk about masquerading as providing women's healthcare? Let's look at their pro-abortion facilities. They are not providing healthcare. Mr. Speaker, 97 to 98 percent of the services that they provide are abortions, not healthcare services.

My colleagues on the left claim that it is somehow worse for a mother to have access to the vital services offered by pregnancy resource centers. In fact, the gentlewoman from California defined them as extremists.

Let's explore the services that these pregnancy centers offer that my colleagues find so offensive and so extreme.

Let's see. How does it hurt for a young family to have access to free prenatal vitamins, formula, and diapers? How about free maternity and baby clothing? How about educational classes on unplanned pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, and adoption information? How about free life skills training and help with housing? How extreme? How offensive?

As is clear by the nearly 1 million women assisted by pregnancy resource centers in 2022, they provide an extraordinary service to women and families across the country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, Texas is home to 200 pregnancy resource centers, and I will not stand by as the Biden administration attempts to take away choice from pregnant women, nor will I stand by and allow them to block funding for the vital programs offered by these pregnancy centers.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I will tell my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that unlike these so-called pregnancy centers, Planned Parenthood actually gives women factually and scientifically accurate information and the full range of choices, while the pregnancy centers have a clear agenda and only one point of view.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms.

MOORE), a champion for women everywhere.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this bill that diverts funds from the welfare program and the TANF program to these crisis pregnancy centers.

Before I get into my argument, let me say how I think it is wonderful that these centers provide clothing, formula, diapers, and comfort to a woman who is planning to have a child and they are able to provide these resources.

However, I do agree with my colleagues that have argued that these so-called crisis pregnancy centers don't meet the mark with regard to meeting a woman who is actually having a crisis pregnancy.

When a woman is having a crisis pregnancy and presents herself, she is having a crisis because she has mental health issues, some social problems, she may have health problems, maybe she is 10 years old and finds herself pregnant as a result of incest. Maybe—and I have known cases like this—she has found herself pregnant and is now needing treatment for cancer and wondering what to do because she is going to have to have chemo and radiation and finds herself pregnant.

The problem with these crisis pregnancy centers is that they only have one agenda, and that is to make sure you stay pregnant. They are going to continue to ignore the facts of your particular case which makes it a crisis pregnancy for you.

I will tell you that I have great credibility on this issue. I am a mother. I am a grandmother of three granddaughters. I am a great-grandmother of three great-granddaughters. I have held women's hands when they have pushed and given birth, and I have held their hands when they needed an abortion because of reasons that are none of our business around here.

I think that if we are going to divert the measly \$16.5 billion block grant that we have to share all across the country that we should not be diverting it to these 2,500 care centers that don't meet the TANF goals of helping poor women deal with their poverty beyond 6 weeks after giving birth.

It is fine to help women who are pregnant, but what do you do after you have given birth and we have diverted all these funds to places like pregnancy resource centers that care only about stopping you from having an abortion?

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6918, the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act.

Mr. Speaker, pregnancy centers play a vital role in supporting women facing unexpected or unplanned pregnancies. Since the Dobbs ruling, pregnancy centers have been under vicious attack by the radical left, especially in my home State of Illinois.

Why? All for simply loving and supporting vulnerable women. There are approximately 3,000 pregnancy centers across the Nation, serving nearly 2 million mothers, fathers, and families completely free of charge.

In 2019 alone, their services and material assistance totaled over \$266 million.

The goal of pregnancy centers is to support the mother and her unborn child. However, they also offer many resources and services, including relationship counseling, prenatal and pregnancy education, pregnancy testing, diapers, and baby clothes, just to name a few.

Women in crisis situations deserve to be protected and supported, period.

Banning funding to pregnancy centers not only discriminates against women but deprives them of the vital care and materials they desperately need, including information on the development of the baby and an ultrasound.

As a volunteer and supporter of crisis pregnancy centers in Illinois, I have seen firsthand how they minister to women in need. Unlike Planned Parenthood, pregnancy centers don't prey upon vulnerable women and coerce them into making decisions they will regret for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative FISCHBACH for leading the way to protect the essential work of pregnancy centers, and I look forward to the House swiftly passing this bill.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), my colleague on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, this bill is yet another step in the Republican crusade to impose a national abortion ban to treat women across America the way Texans have been abused already. And this drastic, harmful strategy is about so much more than abortion healthcare.

It is about the right to life for expectant mothers. It is about the right of a mother to be physically able to deliver a future baby. What happened to Texan Kate Cox is so very instructive. A mother herself, she was advised that having another child could not be possible if she was forced to deliver a fetus that could not live, yet Republicans insisted that she do just that. Under the Texas vigilante law, medical professionals—indeed, anyone who provides advice about an abortion, even for a child who is the victim of rape or incest—there are immediate penalties for them.

□ 1245

As they seek to cut support for Women, Infants, and Children funding, House Republicans want to divert tax money to these propaganda centers, usually posing as a health center but lacking any medical professional staff—public funds to centers designed to fearmonger and intimidate vulnerable women.

While Republicans demand protection of life from the moment of conception, they show so little interest in life after delivery. Women deserve healthcare protection free from coercion. For every American whose freedom is threatened by Republican interference, both patients and their doctors, I strongly oppose this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act, which will block a Biden administration proposed rule prohibiting States from funding pregnancy resource centers which support the lives of both mothers and their unborn children.

Pregnancy resource centers offer compassionate support and care to women as they choose to become mothers and bring life into this world. Unfortunately, the Biden administration is trying to take away resources from facilities that provide women and families with quality healthcare services, emotional support, and supplies, like diapers. The result is pregnant women having less access to maternal care critical to both the health of the mother and unborn child. This is despicable.

As a pharmacist, I swore an oath to do no harm and to protect the sanctity of human life. That means standing up for pregnancy resource centers, which in my district provide valuable, life-changing support for women and children.

I encourage any of my colleagues who are unwilling to support these facilities to go and visit them. I have, and I saw for myself how the work they do is changing lives.

We value women, we value life, and this bill prioritizes both.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill and prevent the defunding of these critical health centers.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose H.R. 6918 because it is just another attempt by the Republican leadership to advance their extremist war on women.

As we again face another Republican-manufactured shutdown crisis, the Republican leadership advances this bill to divert money intended for poor children to anti-abortion propaganda and facilities that provide deceptive and inaccurate information.

The House should take immediate action to eliminate child poverty, not promote efforts to restrict women's reproductive choices.

Alarming, just one year after the Republican-led expiration of Democratic poverty-lowering investments in workers and families, the child poverty rate more than doubled, causing the biggest one-year increase in poverty we have ever seen.

If Republicans truly wanted to help pregnant and parenting families, they

would fully restore the child tax credit, dramatically increase childcare funding to address the childcare crisis, and make it easier to get critical services like Medicaid.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his tremendous leadership on this and so many other important issues, including life issues. I thank MICHELLE FISCHBACH for her brave and courageous leadership, and our Speaker for making sure that this legislation got to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, at a New Jersey pregnancy resource center dinner, two women, through tears of joy, expressed their deep and abiding gratitude for the incredible love, respect, and care that persuaded them to reverse their decision to abort their babies. They spoke about how desperate they were, even hopeless. They spoke of the pressure that they felt to abort, until they met the director of the pregnancy resource center, who reached out to both of them in a gentle and nonjudgmental way.

They chose life, and thanked God, the director, and the pregnancy resource center for helping them to avert the loss of their babies' lives.

Then, two teenaged girls took to the podium and spoke about their lives—school, sports, friends—and their reverence for the sanctity of all human life. Near the end of their remarks—I didn't see this coming nor did many people in the room—they turned toward the director of the center and thanked her for being there for their moms through those difficult times and said: If you weren't there for them, we would be dead. Two wonderful young women talking about how without the pregnancy center, they would have been dead.

There are more than 2,700 pregnancy resource centers throughout the United States. Each and every one of them is an oasis of love, compassion, empathy, respect, and care for both mothers and their precious children.

Americans agree with the noble work of pregnancy care centers. The new Marist national poll, released just yesterday, found that 83 percent of all Americans, including 75 percent of Democrats, support—I say again support—pregnancy resource centers.

There is a growing number of people throughout this country in this great human rights movement who really protect the unborn child and their mothers and stand with women and their children. We reject the violence of abortion, dismemberment, child beatings, and abortion pills.

How does the pill work? It literally starves the baby to death. That is how they die; they starve to death.

Congresswoman MICHELLE FISCHBACH's legislation prohibits Biden's new policy proposal that discriminates against pregnancy resource

centers. The bill, the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act ensures that pregnancy resource centers cannot be excluded or restricted from receiving TANF funding as proposed by the rule that is being pushed by the President.

The Biden administration and some Governors and lawmakers continue, Mr. Speaker, to smear and misrepresent the noble work of pregnancy resource centers. We can't allow that to happen.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. MCCLELLAN), my esteemed colleague.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this dangerous H.R. 6918.

This legislation is the House Republicans' latest attempt to spread inaccurate information while advancing their extreme anti-abortion agenda and attacking reproductive freedom.

This bill would divert TANF funding that is intended to help struggling families and children, the very families that face higher maternal and infant death rates than some Third World countries. It would divert funding to help these families to fund anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers whose sole purpose is to coerce, deceive, and manipulate pregnant patients into carrying their pregnancies to term. These centers often share biased and medically inaccurate information, purposefully misleading patients into believing they can get the healthcare they need. Abortion care is healthcare.

These centers delay care, deny access to qualified medical professionals, and that is critically dangerous for pregnant patients who need timely healthcare services. These centers are unethical and jeopardize patients' well-being, yet extreme House Republicans want the Federal Government to support them at the expense of the vulnerable children and families, again, who face higher infant mortality rates than in many Third World countries.

This legislation exemplifies Republicans' bad-faith efforts. Essential TANF funds should not be used to help these programs instead of helping needy families. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YAKYM).

Mr. YAKYM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act.

Mr. Speaker, pregnancy centers provide vital services to expectant mothers and new parents at no cost. This includes pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, parenting classes, diapers and wipes, formula, and outfits.

When my wife and I had very little money and we were expecting our first child, we turned to one such pregnancy center for an ultrasound. Due to my personal experience with that pregnancy center, I find the other side of

the aisle's characterization of these pregnancy centers to be nothing short of insulting.

The Biden administration is trying to circumvent Congress and take away this critical lifeline from low-income women by stopping States from using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, funds for pregnancy centers. Instead of securing our border, the Biden administration is trying to take away diapers and parenting classes from low-income women.

The Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act would stop this harmful policy in its tracks and ensure pregnancy centers continue to provide valuable services to low-income pregnant women and new parents.

I thank my colleague, Mrs. FISCHBACH, for introducing this important bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are insulted by the issues that we are raising because I have a brief here in front of me from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists which talks about the fact that these pregnancy crisis centers use digital marketing tactics to target people seeking information about abortion care. According to their studies, 71 percent of these centers use deceptive means, such as spreading thoroughly debunked misinformation, and 38 percent of them do not clearly state on their home page that they don't provide abortion care.

If you are mad at us for raising these points, talk to the College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, because they have done an in-depth, comprehensive study to talk about the repeated misinformation that these centers give out to women who are in crisis. The deceptive information that they give to them puts these women's lives at risk. If you are so pro-life, why do you not care about the life of the mother?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LOIS FRANKEL).

Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, my, my, my, Republicans are at it again, trying every which way to obstruct legal access to abortion, preventing women from the freedom of making their own choice of when or whether to start or grow a family.

This time, Republicans want to fund fake clinics run by anti-abortion activists who deceptively provide women with misleading information with one purpose: to scare, disgrace, or pressure them from getting an abortion.

Shamefully, in order to bankroll these fake centers, this Republican bill grabs funding from a program designed to assist needy pregnant women and children get back on their feet.

Overwhelmingly, Americans believe that women should make their own personal healthcare decisions without interference by politicians.

This proposed legislation is dangerous hypocrisy on steroids and not worthy of support.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Democrats and the Biden administration are purposely targeting and misrepresenting pregnancy centers in their proposed rule and seeking to intimidate States that fund them.

Pregnancy resource centers play a vital role to both mothers and fathers, empowering them in their decision to choose life for their baby, by providing realistic alternatives in stark contrast to organizations exclusively focused on abortion.

There is no deceit underlying pregnancy centers. They are another option for women who are looking for an alternative to abortion. It is disgraceful that Democrats mischaracterize these organizations in an effort to limit a woman's choice to raise her child.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF).

□ 1300

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this bill.

Listening to my colleagues across the aisle talk about pregnancy centers is astounding. They appear to have never set foot in one and have fallen for the abortion industry's lies, hook, line, and sinker.

I served on the board of a pregnancy center in my area for many years. During my service, we even contracted for a mobile sonogram to go to help the ladies who were in disadvantaged areas and lacked transportation to get to the pregnancy center.

The sonogram is the greatest tool in use against the death culture. In Plano, Texas, if you find yourself unexpectedly pregnant without a support network, feeling lost and anxious, you can go to a number of local pregnancy centers. There, you will be met by kind, caring, compassionate staff, both volunteer nurses and medical doctors. They offer pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling, classes, and testing, all at no cost. There are nearly 3,000 of these centers around the Nation, mainly run by local volunteers simply because they want to help.

In 2021, the pregnancy centers served almost 1 million women and their babies, and this number does not even include the fathers, who are part of this equation.

Yet, in spite of all this good, the administration has decided to punish pregnancy centers. Why? Because they do not perform abortions.

Let that sink in. Your tax dollars fund the death culture but not the life culture. Pregnancy centers give out free diapers, parenting classes, and ultrasounds, and their volunteers lend a helping hand to moms across America who decide to keep their unborn person. Because these centers will not bend the knee to the President's radical abortion agenda, they are going to be punished.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill and to stand with pregnant moms and their babies.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would just love to point out to anybody who cares for real facts a 2006 congressional report and investigation that found false and misleading health information provided by federally funded pregnancy resource centers. That will give you an accurate picture of just what goes on behind those doors.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative SÁNCHEZ for yielding and for her leadership on this important issue.

I rise today in opposition to the so-called Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act, which would prevent the Department of Health and Human Services from restricting funds to crisis pregnancy centers.

We know, as we have heard, and is included in the report that Representative SÁNCHEZ just mentioned, that crisis pregnancy centers prey on people at a very vulnerable time. They often spread misinformation to further what is clearly an anti-choice agenda. They routinely use deceptive advertising to get people into the doors, and then they mislead them about the services they provide.

In fact, a center in Ohio was caught making outlandish assertions, including that "condoms were only 50 percent effective, the spread of STDs could only be prevented if people followed 'God's plan' of avoiding sex before marriage, and that if a woman who has an STD gets an abortion, 'your STDs travel up your cervix into your organs and could kill you.'"

This deception is outrageous, dangerous, and unconscionable, which is why I have introduced the Stop Anti-abortion Disinformation Act, H.R. 2736, to direct the Federal Trade Commission to issue rules prohibiting unfair or deceptive advertising of abortion services.

This, Mr. Speaker, will really make a difference because anyone seeking reproductive care should have access to a real healthcare provider that will provide them with comprehensive and accurate medical information.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Oregon.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, anyone seeking reproductive care should have access to a real healthcare provider that will provide them with real, comprehensive, and accurate medical information. That is not what they get at pregnancy resource centers. I urge my colleagues to reject this bill.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEUBE).

Mr. STEUBE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6918, the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act, introduced by Congresswoman FISCHBACH, and I thank her for introducing this important bill to push back against the Biden administration's shocking demonization of pregnancy resource centers.

These centers provide loving care and resources for pregnant women and mothers of newborns who face trying times.

Pregnancy resource centers provide a wide array of services, including free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, parenting and prenatal education, and lactation consultations. They give out free diapers, formula, and baby clothes for mothers of newborns.

In my district, the Sarasota Medical Pregnancy Center does tremendous work as a lifeline for pregnant women in need. They lovingly care for these women who face challenging circumstances. There are trained medical professionals present who perform free ultrasounds and provide the care these women want and need.

Unfortunately, Democrats continually seek to delegitimize these vital organizations simply because they provide an alternative to abortion.

After the Dobbs decision was released, nearly 100 pregnancy crisis centers, including 4 in my home State of Florida, were attacked and vandalized by leftwing radical groups. Despite repeated pleas from Members of Congress, our Department of Justice largely refused to actively investigate this organized criminal activity.

Now, the Biden administration is singling out pregnancy crisis centers to exclude them from eligibility under the TANF program, all because these centers encourage women to have their babies.

It was a deliberate act by the Biden administration to appease radical pro-abortion activists by attacking pregnancy centers that provide so much to pregnant women.

This bill simply ensures that the Biden administration cannot exclude these centers from TANF eligibility.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support pregnancy resource centers, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I rise to oppose yet another extreme Republican assault on families and reproductive freedoms.

This thinly veiled attack on abortion rights would let States divert critical Federal funds meant for struggling families with children into shady anti-choice groups.

These so-called crisis pregnancy centers claim to help women, but they are unregulated, unlicensed, and not even required to have medical professionals. They say whatever they want, and they

offer inaccurate, biased information meant to scare women and limit their choices.

Worse, this bill diverts vital TANF funds from needy children and steers it to dangerous anti-choice outfits that will help Republicans secure their extreme national abortion ban.

With partial government funding about to run out, why do Republicans waste our time on these shameful stunts?

I want to be clear: This deceptive bill does not help pregnant women. It simply funds groups that lie to them.

As a woman and mother of three young adult children, I ask my Republican colleagues to truly help women and families and stop deceiving and defunding them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a “no” vote on this deceptive bill.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, last year, Missouri provided \$6.3 million in TANF funding to pregnancy resource centers. This funding is provided for mothers and fathers for non-medical support, such as baby clothes and formula, and support for families until the age of 1.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Missouri Department of Social Services to the Administration for Children and Families opposing any restrictions on using TANF for these critical services.

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES,
November 30, 2023.

Re Strengthening Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as a Safety Net and Work Program (RIN 0970-AC99).

Administration for Children and Families,
Office of Family Assistance,
Washington, DC.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) has reviewed in detail the Notice of Public Rulemaking (NPRM), RIN 0970-AC99, issued by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on October 2, 2023. Below, please find DSS' comments on the proposed rule. DSS believes the proposed rule should be modified significantly before being enacted. Our comments are in three main areas:

Allowability of youth services designed to break the cycle of poverty.

Allowability of programs that support pregnant women and positive outcomes for their children, and

Allowability of using third party expenditures to meet TANF MOE requirements.

In addition, we emphasize the importance of a phased implementation to allow states time to adjust to the final rule, regardless of any revisions made subsequent to the issuance of the NPRM.

We elaborate on these points separately below.

ALLOW A BROADER RANGE OF YOUTH SERVICES DESIGNED TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

One of the hallmarks of the TANF program is that it allowed flexibility for states to best serve the populations in their states. The 1999 TANF Final Rule, 64 FR 17720 et seq. (April 12, 1999), drives home this point repeatedly in its preamble:

“The law gives States, and federally recognized Indian tribes, the authority to use Federal welfare funds ‘in any manner that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purpose’ of the new program. It provides them

broad flexibility to set eligibility rules and decide what benefits are most appropriate. It also enables States to implement their new programs without getting the ‘approval’ of the Federal government. In short, it offers States and Tribes an opportunity to try new, far-reaching changes that can respond more effectively to the needs of families within their own unique environments.”

States have used this flexibility to fund a wide range of programs, including programs focused on serving youth in afterschool settings. The NPRM suggests that these programs, which provide a valuable social support and help reduce school dropout and teen pregnancy rates, would no longer be allowable except to the extent that “pregnancy prevention programming is a part of an ongoing program.” States did not make this connection between after-school programs and TANF Purpose 3 on their own. ACF issued guidance at the outset of the TANF program that explicitly made the connection between youth programs and TANF purpose 3:

“A State may use its TANF or MOE funds for services and benefits that directly lead to (or can be expected to lead to) the accomplishment of one of these four purposes. For example, it could fund special initiatives to improve the motivation, performance, and self-esteem of youth (e.g., activities like those included in the HHS Girl Power! Campaign or sponsored by the Boys and Girls Clubs) because such initiatives would be expected to reduce school-dropout and teen pregnancy rates.”

In addition to after-school programs, Missouri's TANF expenditures have supported in-school initiatives that support positive youth outcomes. For example, the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program gives students in selected at-risk areas the tools needed to make a successful transition to post-secondary education and meaningful employment with self-sustaining wages to decrease the need for government assistance.

The proposed rule would not only impact general youth programs, but also a state's ability to provide employment services to teens and older youth who are not yet parents. ACF-IM-2012-01 speaks to the importance of programming that supports youth employment and reminds states that “. . . a jurisdiction may use TANF and/or MOE funds to serve youth up through the age of 24 in a subsidized employment program under TANF statutory purpose one,” and that TANF funds may be used whether or not the youth resides in the home of a parent or relative. Furthermore, the same memorandum speaks to other allowable activities that support youth in summer jobs programs, including education and training, supportive services, transportation for employed persons for the purpose of attending work or training, counseling and employment related services, and incentive payments that reward the participant for achieving a predetermined milestone.

Similarly, the NPRM calls into question the funding of college scholarships for childless older youth as an allowable TANF expenditure. Studies have indicated that higher educational attainment typically translates into a reduced likelihood of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and increases the chances the individual will become a supportive member of a two-parent household. These facts support both TANF Purposes three and four. However, interpretations of this research are subjective, and the uncertainty regarding ACF's acceptance of supporting evidence places a significant risk on states like Missouri that utilize TANF funds for scholarships. At a minimum, we contend these expenditures should be allowable for youth and young adults with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

After 25 years of guidance that reinforces that after-school and other programs targeting youth and young adults meet a TANF Purpose, the sudden shift to render these programs unallowable is illogical and short sighted. The TANF program was created to help states fund programs that break the cycle of poverty, and serving youth is one of the proven ways of doing so.

Missouri strongly encourages ACF to reconsider the proposed rule and continue to allow states to invest in their youth, which in turn is an investment in the future.

ALLOW PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT PREGNANT WOMEN AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

The NPRM states that—

“Programs that only or primarily provide pregnancy counseling to women only after they become pregnant likely do not meet the reasonable person standard because the connection to preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies is tenuous or non-existent, and therefore do not accomplish purpose three.”

Missouri funds programs for pregnant women that 1) set up the unborn/newborn child for success by providing a range of services and supports; and 2) offer resources to the mother that decrease the chances of future unwanted pregnancies. Examples of benefits and services provided through these comprehensive programs include but are not limited to food, clothing and supplies related to pregnancy, newborn care and parenting, housing and utilities, job training and placement, prenatal care and ultrasound services, medical and mental health care, transportation, establishing and promoting responsible paternity, and parenting skills classes.

We contend that these services are allowable under multiple TANF purposes. And we understand that states will have the opportunity to provide research or programmatic evidence that supports these programs' link to a TANF purpose/s. However, these judgments are subjective, and we are concerned that decisions of TANF allowability after funds have been expended place undue risk on state budgets and the comprehensive nature of the programs. Accordingly, programs that support pregnant women and positive outcomes for their children should be clearly allowable and not subject to the reasonable person test.

CONSIDER ALLOWING THIRD PARTY MOE TO COUNT IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

The Uniform administrative requirements that govern TANF explicitly allow third-party spending to count toward a state's Maintenance of Effort spending, and this was codified in the TANF regulations as part of the 2008 Final Rule for the Deficit Reduction Act. The NPRM would continue to allow third party spending from public entities to count as MOE but would prohibit the use of nonprofit spending. This change would severely impact Missouri, and we urge ACF to reconsider.

Missouri has a unique set up with the non-profit agencies that provide MOE toward the state's TANF claim in that the same agencies also receive TANF block grant funding. Missouri has established as matching requirement, whereby the TANF funds received are contingent on the non-profits also providing documented MOE spending. This cost-sharing responsibility has created high quality public-private partnerships, and the state's investment of TANF funds has allowed the non-profits to expand services to low-income families.

Missouri urges ACF to consider allowing third party MOE from non-profit agencies if those dollars are part of a matching requirement for receiving TANF funds. In this way, the non-profit community will be invested in

helping further the purposes of TANF alongside the state.

CONSIDER SLOWING DOWN IMPLEMENTATION TO ALLOW STATES TO ADJUST TO NEW RULES

The NPRM includes several sweeping changes that will have a dramatic impact on how states operate their TANF program. Further it suggests that the rules could be in effect as soon as October 2024, if the rules are enacted in the current fiscal year. This is simply too fast. States are already in the budgeting process for next year, and to have such significant changes in what is allowable for TANF and TANF MOE would be detrimental to states.

States need time to educate legislators on the changes in what programs can and cannot be funded with TANF; in some cases, they need to unlearn rules that have been in place since the inception of TANF. Furthermore, states need time to adjust contracts and spending plans.

Previous proposed changes to the TANF program that were introduced in Congress would have included a phased-in approach to changes. Missouri urges ACF to consider something similar, with the changes in allowability and third-party MOE going into effect over the course of three to five years. For example, ACF could allow states that currently claim third party MOE to establish a baseline, then allow them to claim 75 percent 50 percent, and 25 percent of that amount over the next three years. This would allow states to adjust spending over the course of several years, rather than leaving states at risk of missing MOE requirements and losing federal TANF dollars through a penalty process.

The proposed rules would be the most sweeping change to the TANF program since its inception in 1996. To have these changes all take place at the same time and with very little lead time creates an undue burden on the states. Missouri DSS strongly encourages ACF to reconsider these changes.

Our partners and providers have expressed many of the same concerns we have noted above. Please see the attached twenty-two (22) letters from stakeholders across the state who would be impacted by these changes.

We appreciate your consideration of the submitted comments and suggestions and look forward to working together to strengthen TANF and to strengthen and support the families that we serve.

Sincerely,

ROBERT J. KNODELL,
Director.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, at least four other States—Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—provide TANF funding to pregnancy resource centers, which meets the TANF purposes of assisting needy families and reducing dependence on government.

As Missouri's comment letter states, it is imperative that we protect this funding and the vital services pregnancy resource centers provide for our families and communities.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. DAVIDS).

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, people were scared. They feared for the future of their rights and ability to make deeply personal decisions about their own bodies. I have heard from many

people who are concerned that their children and grandchildren might grow up with less rights than they had.

In August 2022, Kansans made their voices overwhelmingly clear: Politics and politicians have no place in the middle of healthcare decisions. Those decisions are between a person and their doctor alone.

However, despite the resounding messages delivered by Kansans and other States, extremists persist in their relentless effort to deprive Americans of their fundamental right to choose.

Sadly, that is where we find ourselves today, where certain Members of this body are attempting to push legislation that would directly limit access to the full range of reproductive care.

This bill blatantly misleads the American people, diverting funds meant for food, rent, and childcare to certain harmful facilities that purposely provide disinformation to people seeking access to care. I won't stand for it, and neither will Kansans.

We should be expanding access to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, rather than masking misinformation behind dishonest policies that actually endanger a person's health. Even further, we should be upfront with the American people. Isn't that the bare minimum?

Let me be clear: The right to choose is fundamental. Working to strip that right should never be a priority, especially days before a possible government shutdown that would have devastating impacts on hardworking families.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to stand with me in delivering a powerful message, one that the American people absolutely need to hear: Your ability to decide what is best for you, your body, your family, and your future is inherently your choice, now and always.

For this reason, at the appropriate time, I will offer a motion to recommit this bill back to committee. If the House rules permitted, I would have offered the motion with an important amendment that would ensure that taxpayer dollars cannot be allocated to pregnancy centers that provide medically inaccurate information and put the health of a woman at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the RECORD the text of this amendment and hope that my colleagues will join me in voting "yes" on this motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, tens of thousands of pro-life Americans will converge on The National Mall for the March for Life on the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling, which legalized abortion in all 50 States.

Today's legislation will ensure that expectant mothers will have access to alternatives to abortion and choose the

life-affirming services provided at pregnancy resource centers.

I include in the RECORD letters of support from the National Right to Life Committee and CatholicVote and a statement of support from Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America.

NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE,
Alexandria, VA, January 17, 2024.

Re Scorecard Advisory, H.R. 6918, the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) urges you to support H.R. 6918, the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act. NRLC intends to include the roll call on H.R. 6918 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 118th Congress.

This legislation would ensure that pregnancy centers are eligible for state-directed federal funds through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Pregnancy centers serve millions of clients annually and offer hope and support for women and their unborn children. In a post-*Roe* America, it is more important now than ever that pregnancy centers can effectively support mothers and their babies.

The Biden Administration is currently proposing a rule to restrict federal funds from going to pregnancy centers in a number of states that direct funds to them through the TANF program. H.R. 6918 would prohibit HHS from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing this or any similar rulemaking that would restrict use of TANF for pregnancy centers.

National Right to Life and several affected states submitted official comments in opposition to the proposed Biden rule, "Strengthening Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as a Safety Net and Work Program," published on October 2, 2023 (the "Proposed Rule"). The Proposed Rule, among other things, targets pregnancy resource centers by threatening to strip them of millions of dollars of funding claiming, without evidence, that pregnancy centers do not meet TANF criteria. This is funding that is currently being used to compassionately help women and their unborn babies.

Nearly 3,000 pregnancy centers serve about 2 million clients annually, saving local communities millions of dollars by providing services at little to no cost. Many pregnancy centers provide limited obstetrical ultrasounds under a local doctor's oversight as well as parenting classes. In addition, nearly all centers provide material assistance such as diapers, cribs, and car seats as well as practical help such as connecting a mother in need to local resources that can help her with housing or transportation.

For the above reasons, the National Right to Life Committee urges you to support H.R. 6918. NRLC intends to include the roll call on H.R. 6918 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes of the 118th Congress.

Sincerely

CAROL TOBIAS,
President.
SCOTT FISCHBACH,
Executive Director.
JENNIFER POPIK, J.D.,
Legislative Director.

JANUARY 15, 2024.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of CatholicVote, representing the voices of millions of Catholics across America who seek to renew our country and our culture, I am writing to voice our support for H.R. 6914, "The Pregnant Students' Rights Act" and H.R. 6918, "Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act."

Women who choose life of their children, and the private organizations that support them, are under unprecedented attack by those who think abortion is the only answer. Unfortunately, this pro-death approach is endorsed by both the Biden administration as well as the Democratic Party. The result is that women who find themselves in situations they did not prepare for falsely believe they are alone and that the only way out is the death of their unborn child.

H.R. 6914, introduced by Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-IA, would amend the Higher Education Act to require higher education institutions to distribute information about the rights of pregnant students and the resources available to them at the school, via their website, student handbooks, emails, and during student orientations. The bill also reinforces current law requiring schools to adopt and publish procedures for students to file complaints of discrimination related to their sex, pregnancy, or parental status by imploring colleges to make these existing protections and accommodations more widely known.

H.R. 6918, introduced by Rep. Michelle Fischbach, R-MN, would block a Biden Administration rule that could prohibit states from giving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to pregnancy centers which support the life of both the mother and unborn child.

Currently there have been hundred of physical attacks on pregnancy resource centers. It is no surprise that the Biden administration would tacitly endorse those attacks by attempting to divert resources away from these lifesaving and life affirming entities. Joe Biden would prefer to make it harder for moms to choose life for their unborn child and take care of themselves and their baby. If this rule takes effect, women in America will have fewer alternatives to abortion and less access to maternal care.

The passage of these bills should not be controversial; however, the extremism of the Democratic Party has made it clear that if you are a young mother who chooses life they will make it harder for you to prosper. CatholicVote will score in favor of both H.R. 6914, "The Pregnant Students' Rights Act" and H.R. 6918, "Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act" in our annual scorecard for the 118th Congress.

Sincerely,

THOMAS MCCLUSKY,
Director of Government Affairs,
CatholicVote.

HOUSE COMMITTEE VOTES TO PROTECT PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTERS FROM DISCRIMINATION—SBA PRO-LIFE AMERICA

(By Mary Owens, January 11, 2024)

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee passed the Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act, legislation to ensure that pregnancy centers cannot be discriminated against from receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. The House is expected to vote on the bill as early as next week.

This bill is in response to the Biden administration's proposed Health and Human Services (HHS) rule that discriminates against life-affirming non-profits. If the rule goes into effect, it could render pregnancy centers ineligible for this funding. In December, SBA Pro-Life America and the Charlotte Lozier Institute submitted a public comment pointing out how the rule is unfair and inaccurate.

The national pro-life group SBA Pro-Life America celebrated the committee's work in a statement:

The Biden administration is working overtime to prove they are not pro-choice, but

pro-abortion by proposing this discriminatory rule and ignoring the majority of Americans who support public funding of pregnancy resource centers," said the Honorable Marilyn Musgrave, SBA Pro-Life America's vice president of government affairs. "The nearly 3,000 pregnancy resource centers nationwide provide women with medical, material and emotional support for themselves and their families. We are grateful to the committee for passing this bill that prevents discrimination against centers and protects their ability to continue receiving TANF funds to help moms and families.

Thank you to Chairman Jason Smith and Representatives Michelle Fischbach, Claudia Tenney and Smith for championing this important legislation and getting it through committee. We urge the House to pass this commonsense legislation."

The proposed rule is the latest in a string of political attacks on life-affirming organizations.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, we will all celebrate life and support pregnant and parenting women and families.

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 6 minutes remaining.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

We keep hearing about how these centers provide infant formula, and we have a program that helps mothers afford infant formula. It is called WIC.

I remind my colleagues that House Republicans' fiscal year 2024 Agriculture appropriations bill would have made benefit cuts and eligibility losses for millions of mothers who rely on WIC. It would have shortchanged WIC by \$800 million.

So, I find the argument that the centers are so necessary to be specious because that could have been provided under the Agriculture appropriations bill, which my Republican colleagues wanted to cut so dramatically. If they really cared about working families, they wouldn't be asking for those deep and unconscionable cuts to a program that provides infant formula to mothers.

□ 1315

As we have seen over the past hour, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are choosing to double down on their war on women. These centers have coerced, deceived, and put women's lives in danger with inaccurate, biased information, but don't just take my word for it. A congressional investigation found that the majority of these clinics surveyed provided false information about abortion. The American Medical Association has called these centers unethical because of the gross disinformation that they push on vulnerable women.

These centers are not regulated by State's consumer protection statutes which govern the practice of medicine. Republicans have proven they have no

interest in amending this bill to actually protect pregnant women seeking care from these facilities.

My Ways and Means Republican colleagues voted against ensuring these facilities provide medically accurate information.

Why are they so afraid to provide women with medically accurate information?

My Republican colleagues voted against prohibiting these facilities from providing biased reproductive health information or counseling.

Let me be very clear. Democrats have fought, and we continue to fight, for comprehensive equitable access to reproductive healthcare for women.

We passed the Women's Health Protection Act twice.

We passed the right to contraception.

The American people have been very clear about supporting access to reproductive healthcare. Democrats have proven that we stand with them, and this bill that the Republicans have put on the floor today once again shows that my Republican colleagues are willing to discard pregnant women to appease their extremist anti-choice rightwing base.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time. Pregnancy resource centers are an important option for pregnant women seeking care. They provide critical services to support the health of mothers and their unborn children, including providing needed resources, like diapers, prenatal vitamins, transportation, and parenting classes.

It is unacceptable that the Biden administration proposes to take this option away from mothers and to restrict their access to healthcare.

The administration does not have authority under TANF to restrict funds for pregnancy resource centers. What is worse is that the administration is doing this in order to send more taxpayer dollars to Planned Parenthood. This Congress must act on behalf of mothers and the right to life.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 6918, the so called Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act.

This bill would achieve the exact opposite of its purported goal of supporting parenting women and families—instead, it would divert funding away from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF. TANF provides cash assistance directly to struggling families with children to pay for essential needs. Hypocritically, this extreme GOP bill would siphon off funding intended for our neediest families to prop up a network of unlicensed, unregulated Crisis Pregnancy Centers run by anti-choice activists.

If the GOP was truly the "pro-life" party, they would know that TANF is the only federal assistance program that struggling families can use to buy diapers for their babies. Families who receive direct cash assistance

through TANF can purchase diapers for their children at their nearest store. Some of my Republican colleagues have argued that many Crisis Pregnancy Centers provide diapers for families. However, if parents had to instead rely on Crisis Pregnancy Centers for essential childcare needs, they could be forced to travel long distances to centers that might not be accessible through public transportation. Additionally, an investigation by this very body found that 87% of anti-abortion counseling centers provide false or misleading information about reproductive care.

If the GOP was in touch with the needs of their constituents, they would know that diaper need is a crisis in America that can overwhelm families who are already financially struggling. An average monthly supply of diapers for a single child costs \$80 to \$100. As of 2023, half of U.S. families report not being able to afford enough diapers to keep their child clean, dry, and healthy, and 3 in 5 parents report missing work or school because they can't afford the diapers required to leave their baby in childcare. Tell me, how is taking away the only federal funding for diapers pro-life?

I strongly oppose this farce of a bill that would only harm struggling families.

Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak in strong opposition to the proposed legislation, H.R. 6918—Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act.

This legislation, in my view, represents a concerning step in the wrong direction.

It has been characterized by critics as part of a broader effort by conservative Republicans to limit women's reproductive freedom.

With nearly 18 months having passed since the pivotal *Roe v. Wade* decision was overturned, the introduction of this bill signals a continued push towards what some view as a national ban on abortion.

I believe that reproductive rights are a fundamental aspect of individual autonomy, and any legislative measures that may restrict or impede these rights warrant scrutiny.

Furthermore, the potential allocation of federal funds to support such measures raises serious concerns about the appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and the role of government in personal healthcare decisions.

I am committed to advocating for policies that uphold and protect the reproductive rights of individuals, recognizing the importance of a balanced and inclusive approach that respects diverse perspectives.

This legislation seeks to undermine a woman's right to access abortion services by employing tactics that involve misleading information, deceptive practices, and attempts at shaming individuals seeking reproductive care.

We as Democrats, in response, remain steadfast in our commitment to enshrine reproductive freedom as a legal right through the Women's Health Protection Act (H.R. 12).

This comprehensive legislation aims to safeguard individuals' access to essential reproductive healthcare services and protect them from deceptive practices that may obstruct their right to make informed choices about their reproductive health.

We must advocate for a legislative approach that prioritizes the autonomy and well-being of individuals seeking reproductive care while countering efforts to curtail their rights through disinformation and coercion.

In addition, H.R. 6918 raises significant concerns as it proposes funding for what are com-

monly referred to as "crisis pregnancy centers" or anti-abortion centers (AACs).

These entities have been criticized for engaging in deceptive practices that aim to manipulate women during their pregnancies, potentially hindering their ability to access comprehensive reproductive care.

In light of these considerations, I firmly oppose H.R. 6918 and will work to ensure that the legislative process reflects a careful examination of its potential impact on the rights and choices of individuals.

In my home state of Texas where abortion have been completely banned, our state has continued to struggle with maternal mortality and morbidity, and the rates are only expected to increase as the years go by.

In 2013, when Texas first started tracking deaths and severe illness or injury from pregnancy and childbirth, Black women were twice as likely as white women and four times as likely as Hispanic women to die from pregnancy-related causes.

This number has only increased as more women are being denied lifesaving abortion measures and face inadequate care after birth.

Another undermining aspect of this bill is in its use of TANF, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

TANF plays a crucial role as it is a vital resource for families across the country.

This bill, however, introduces a concerning element by potentially creating a loophole that could divert essential funding away from its intended purpose, channeling it toward anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers.

These centers have faced scrutiny for their practices, with critics arguing that they may engage in deceptive tactics, potentially impacting the comprehensive support available to families.

By allowing TANF funding to be redirected to such centers, there is a risk that the intended assistance for struggling families may be compromised.

TANF's importance cannot be underestimated as it provides financial support, job preparation, and other essential services to low-income families.

The proposed diversion of funds to anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers raises questions about the broader impact on the social safety net and the potential limitations it might place on the availability of diverse and comprehensive resources for those in need.

As discussions on this bill unfold, it is crucial to assess how any changes may affect the original objectives of TANF and the families it is designed to support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 969, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas moves to recommit the bill H.R. 6918 to the Committee on Ways and Means.

The material previously referred to by Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas is as follows:

Ms. Davids of Kansas moves to recommit the bill H.R. 6918 to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. __. LIMITATION.

Section 2 shall not take effect unless the Secretary of Health and Human Services finds that there is no pregnancy center (as defined in section 2) that provides medically inaccurate or deceptive information or puts at risk the health of women.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XIX, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PREGNANT STUDENTS' RIGHTS ACT

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 969, I call up the bill (H.R. 6914) to require institutions of higher education to disseminate information on the rights of, and accommodations and resources for, pregnant students, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 969, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce printed in the bill, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 6914

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Pregnant Students' Rights Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Female students enrolled at institutions of higher education and experiencing an unplanned pregnancy may face pressure that their only option is to receive an abortion or risk academic failure.

(2) Almost 30 percent of all abortions in the United States are performed on women of college age, between the ages of 20 and 24, according to a 2021 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(3) Scientific evidence and personal testimonies document that women who have abortions can be at risk of mental health issues. Studies show that after an abortion, women are 34 percent more likely to develop anxiety disorders, 37 percent more likely to develop depression, 110 percent more likely to rely on alcohol