

Questions for the Record from Senator Charles E. Grassley
Hearing on “A Post-Roe America: The Legal Consequences of the Dobbs Decision”
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1. Based on your clinic’s experience, what are the disparate impacts of abortion on communities of color? How would this disparate impact be affected if crisis pregnancy centers, like yours, were unavailable or less available to provide services to women and families?

Alternatives Pregnancy Center serves all women, and we offer resources that are valuable and needed by lower-income women and communities of color. We provide comprehensive support, so that the women who come to us can truly make free and informed choices even in the midst of unexpected or crisis pregnancies.

Based on conversations we’ve had with women who come to our clinic, many women who had abortions wanted to choose life but felt like caring for a baby was impossible. Our clinic exists to serve women facing exactly those circumstances. We walk with expectant mothers by giving them the practical, financial, and emotional support they need and want to raise their children.

For instance, one young Black woman who came to us after visiting an abortion clinic said she was not sure what she wanted to do. She had planned to get an abortion, but when she learned that she could receive a free ultrasound from our clinic without making a commitment either way, she came to us. In the course of her ultrasound, she was able to talk with our staff about what an abortion procedure really involves, and once she learned the facts about abortion, she realized that deep down inside she couldn’t imagine doing that to her baby.

This young woman wanted to be a mom, but she was scared and overwhelmed by the prospect of caring for a newborn alone. When we offered her medical care, practical support, and a loving community, she chose to keep her baby. Today, she is a thriving young mother with a good job, a robust community, and a beautiful baby.

The truth is, Alternatives Pregnancy Center and other similar organizations across the country empower women. We arm these women with the facts because we believe that only when women truly understand the situation – including knowing the innumerable resources and support available to women and their children – can they make real and informed choices. Our clinic alone serves about 2,500 women a year. We give away \$1.2 million in free services to women of color and low-income women. Our mission is to educate, equip, and entrust *every* woman. And we are there for them no matter what.

2. Can you discuss how your clinic has been affected by the rhetoric and actions of politicians, including those in your own state?

Political figures across the United States have made inflammatory and outrageous remarks about pregnancy care centers, and we've regrettably witnessed elected officials pledging to investigate centers rather than prosecute vandalism against non-profits like ours.

We were particularly dismayed to read California Attorney General Rob Bonta's perspective and the refusal to acknowledge that centers like Alternatives Pregnancy Center are fully licensed health care facilities, employing board-certified obstetricians and gynecologists, nurses, and medical staff. In an alarming show of disregard for the safety of our staff and the women we serve, the California Attorney General's office publicized the addresses of all pregnancy care clinics in the state.

The result was predictable: an increase in violence and threats against pregnancy care clinics and the compassionate individuals who serve there.

We've had to shut down our mobile clinic – which serves victims of human sex trafficking, homeless women, and vulnerable immigrant populations – because of safety concerns for our patients and staff. At great expense, our main clinic was forced to increase on-site security, equip staff with defensive pepper spray, install bullet-proofing on the building's exterior and interior, and add security cameras around the perimeter. We've also received an influx of hateful phone calls and false online reviews of our services.

The increased security proved necessary as, one morning, a man armed with a machete came to our clinic. Thankfully, our on-site security stopped him from entering the building.

Despite all of the hostility, Alternatives Pregnancy Center remains committed to the women in our community. We will protect our patients and staff and continue to provide exceptional health care and support services for moms and babies.

3. Some Senate Democrats have introduced legislation “cracking down” on crisis pregnancy centers by combatting “false advertising” by pro-life pregnancy centers. What kind of impact would this legislation have on Alternatives Pregnancy Center?

Alternatives Pregnancy Center is deeply concerned that these legislative efforts unjustly target pregnancy care centers with the goal of silencing open and honest conversations with women about reproductive decisions. This, however, is not the first time our work has been threatened by legislation intended to intimidate and censor us. A few years ago, California passed a law forcing pregnancy care centers to provide free advertising for abortions. Thankfully, that law was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018.¹

We are proud of the quality health care we provide and are concerned about hostile legislative efforts that censor how we speak about women's health, health care services, and alternatives to

¹ *Nat'l Inst. of Fam. & Life Advocs. v. Becerra*, 138 S. Ct. 2361, 2376 (2018) (holding that “California cannot co-opt the licensed [pregnancy care centers] to deliver its message” directing women to where they can obtain abortions).

abortion such as adoption and parenting. We equip women with the knowledge they need to make informed choices but remain concerned that pregnancy care centers will be limited in what we can say about ourselves and the services we offer expectant moms.

4. Over 70% of women who have an abortion state that one of their reasons for getting the abortion is their financial situation. How does your center respond when a woman expresses those concerns to your staff? How do crisis pregnancy centers like yours alleviate this burden for expecting parents?

Our clinic is keenly aware that finances are often a concern when a woman is expecting a child. When serving women with financial challenges, we acknowledge this reality while also, and more importantly, letting each woman know that she is not walking this path alone.

We work to eliminate financial anxieties and fears about motherhood, so that women are free to choose what is best for them and their babies. We provide the resources a woman needs to care for her child. This includes free-of-charge prenatal, maternity, and post-delivery medical care. We also equip women with free parenting classes and provide them unlimited supplies of diapers, wipes, baby food, clothing, and other baby gear at no cost.

In addition, we connect women with communities that provide long-term assistance and support. Often a local church “adopts” a woman and her baby, helping the new mom secure transportation, housing, jobs, and childcare. These caring communities host baby showers and birthday parties; they provide resources when her car breaks down; they offer help when an unexpected financial strain comes up. Through this community network – from Alternatives Pregnancy Center to local faith communities – women are empowered to be successful moms and professionals.