

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



June 24, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Please protect pregnancy center funding – Line Item 450

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Thank you for leading the people of Florida during this unprecedented challenge posed by the global pandemic and striving to mitigate its impact in our state. Recognizing that you have many difficult decisions ahead of you and that the full fiscal impact of COVID-19 is unknown, we ask you to preserve funding for the Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program (FPSSP).

The Florida Pregnancy Care Network is comprised of almost 100 pregnancy support service centers throughout the state. The Department of Health oversees the program, and for 15 years, the network has managed the good and necessary work of supporting women and their families when choosing to give life to their unborn children. In addition to pregnancy support services, pregnancy centers provide material goods such as diapers, wipes, formula, clothing, car seats, strollers, and other items to women and families in need. They are often the first point of contact for making social service referrals. Centers providing STI testing and treatment help lessen the burden on their local health departments, and this type of assistance from pregnancy centers, has typically been welcomed.

The pandemic has created a greater need for pregnancy centers services, and funding is needed now as much as ever. Due to the rise in unemployment rates, more women and families find themselves without health insurance, and therefore in need of the free well-woman exam provided by the FPSSP program.

Abortions have not declined but appear to have increased during the pandemic. With abortion providers promoting the use of the abortion pill (chemical abortion), counseling for abortion pill reversal is increasing. The death toll from abortion greatly exceeds the number of deaths resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please approve the Florida 2020-21 budget with pregnancy center funding intact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: Most Rev. Felipe J. Estévez, Bishop of St. Augustine & Respect Life Moderator