



Written by [Ty Bodden](#) on June 26, 2026

Federal Funding Threatens Pregnancy Centers' Independence

Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation intended to protect states' ability to direct federal welfare money to pro-life pregnancy centers. Although the bill recognizes the lifesaving work these organizations perform, it would further entangle them with an unconstitutional federal welfare program and expose their missions to political interference.

The House passed [H.R. 6945](#), the [Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act](#), on January 21 by a vote of [215-209](#). All voting Republicans and [Representative Henry Cuellar](#) (D-Texas) supported the bill, while 209 Democrats opposed it.



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Introduced by [Representative Michelle Fischbach](#) (R-Minn.), the [bill would](#) amend the Social Security Act to clarify that states may use [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#) funds to support pregnancy centers. The legislation defines a pregnancy center as an organization that “supports protecting the life of the mother and the unborn child” and “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 other material supports.”

[Representative Chris Smith](#) (R-N.J.), an original cosponsor of the bill and co-chairman of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, [noted](#) in remarks on the House floor that more than 2,700 pregnancy centers operate across the United States, providing medical, material, and spiritual support to mothers and families. He said the centers have been “unfairly maligned, harassed, and discriminated against” because of their life-affirming mission.

These organizations perform [invaluable](#) work. They offer frightened and vulnerable women alternatives to abortion, assist fathers and families, protect preborn children, and provide practical help before and after birth. They deserve protection from government discrimination and harassment. However, Congress should protect pregnancy centers' freedom, not make them financially dependent on Washington, which could set them up for failure.

A Constitutional Problem

[Article I, Section 8](#) of the [U.S. Constitution](#) enumerates the powers delegated to Congress. It does not authorize Congress to operate a national welfare system, subsidize private charities, or fund pregnancy centers.

Protecting innocent life is a legitimate function of government. However, protecting life under the law is different from collecting federal taxes and redistributing the money through [welfare](#) programs.



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[TANF](#) is itself a federal program built upon an expansive and unconstitutional interpretation of congressional power. H.R. 6945 would not create a new appropriation, but it would explicitly place pregnancy centers among the private organizations eligible to receive money flowing through that unconstitutional system. A worthy recipient does not make an unconstitutional expenditure constitutional.

The duty of caring for women, children, and struggling families properly belongs to families, churches, communities, nonprofit organizations, and other private institutions. These entities can provide compassionate assistance without empowering federal bureaucrats or forcing taxpayers to support programs through centralized redistribution.

Federal Money Comes With Strings

Supporters [describe](#) H.R. 6945 as protecting pregnancy centers from hostile federal administrations. Yet [federal funding](#) rarely comes without [federal control](#). Organizations [accepting government money](#) may become [subject](#) to reporting mandates, audits, record-retention requirements, eligibility rules, financial controls, data-collection demands, nondiscrimination regulations, federal employee oversight, and restrictions governing how funds may be spent. The same goes for government and taxpayer funded grants. Even when the original requirements appear reasonable, future administrations may reinterpret them or impose additional conditions on government funding.

A [future](#) administration [hostile](#) to the pro-life mission could demand that participating centers provide referrals for contraception, promote government-approved abortion information, force insurance coverage of sex-change surgeries, adopt objectionable employment policies, collect sensitive information about clients, or alter faith-based counseling programs. Officials could also redefine which services qualify for reimbursement or threaten to withhold funds unless centers comply with new administrative rules.

H.R. 6945 attempts to prevent federal officials from excluding pregnancy centers merely because they protect mothers and preborn children. But Congress cannot guarantee that future lawmakers, regulators, or judges will not attach new conditions to the money.

Once an organization becomes [dependent on government funding](#), the threat of losing that money becomes a powerful means of coercion. Centers may gradually [adjust their operations](#) to satisfy bureaucratic requirements, devote more resources to compliance, or soften their religious and moral message to preserve funding. This process can produce [mission drift](#), weaken private support, turn off private donors, and transform independent charities into contractors serving government programs, as is often seen today with private/public partnerships.

Wrong Reasons for Opposition

Democrats [overwhelmingly opposed](#) H.R. 6945, but their opposition did not represent a principled defense of limited government or constitutional spending restraints. The Left has [targeted](#) pregnancy centers because these organizations [reject abortion](#) and [offer women](#) life-affirming alternatives.

Pregnancy centers should not face discrimination, vandalism, political harassment, or regulatory punishment because they protect preborn children. Government must treat them equally under the law and defend their [God-given rights](#).

Nevertheless, Republicans should not answer leftist hostility by placing pregnancy centers more deeply within the federal welfare system. Protecting these organizations from one administration's regulations



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while exposing them to a broader system of federal funding and oversight could create even greater dangers later.

Protect Life and Preserve Independence

The [pro-life](#) movement should defend pregnancy centers while preserving their independence from government. States should repeal laws that target pregnancy centers, and public officials should prosecute violence, threats, vandalism, and other crimes committed against them. They should also prohibit abortion and protect human life from conception.

At the same time, churches, families, businesses, charities, and individuals should voluntarily provide the resources pregnancy centers need. Income and property taxes must be eliminated, God must return to the center of the country, and unconstitutional spending must be reined in. Private support encourages accountability to donors and communities rather than bureaucracies.

H.R. 6945 reflects a commendable desire to defend mothers, preborn children, and the organizations serving them. Congressional leaders should be thanked for that. However, its reliance on federal welfare dollars sets a dangerous precedent. Pregnancy centers should remain free to save lives, serve families, proclaim the truth about abortion, and carry out their missions — without federal money and strings attached.



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