



FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

BACKGROUND

PREGNANCY SUPPORT SERVICES SUPPORT: SB 444 (Bean); HB 41 (Toledo)

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The Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program (FPSSP) is operated by the Florida Pregnancy Care Network, which has oversight of 106 pregnancy support centers throughout the state that provide resources and services to pregnant mothers as they prepare to parent or place their babies for adoption. These centers are local, non-profit organizations that offer support and assistance to women faced with difficult pregnancy decisions. In addition to free pregnancy tests, peer counseling and referrals, centers offer classes on pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, and life skills. Clients are eligible to receive services for up to one year after the child's birth.

The program was created in 2005 and the Florida Department of Health has received an annual appropriation since its inception, which has risen to \$4 million in the current year. Proviso language expanded the program to include women's wellness services.

BILL PROVISIONS:

- Codifies the Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program in Florida Statutes
- Defines program requirements including:
 - 90 percent of contract funds be used for direct clients services
 - Background screenings of all paid staff and volunteers who provide direct services to eligible clients
 - Informational materials must be current and accurate, with reference source of medical statements
 - Contract management through the Department of Health, annual compliance monitoring, and defined contract deliverables

RATIONALE:

Approximately 59% of Florida pregnancies (207,000) in 2010 were unintentional, significantly higher than the national rate of 45%.* 38% resulted in abortion.**

In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the FPSSP served 45,722 clients, provided 143,206 services, and handled 6,064 phone calls to its helpline.

Even for those who support abortion, increased awareness of abortion alternatives ensures authentic reproductive choice.

Establishing the program in statute ensures more favorable consideration under the current budget process.

* https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/stateup10.pdf

** <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-unintended-pregnancy-florida>

***For additional information, please contact --
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