

TO: Revenue Committee
FROM: Marion Miner, Associate Director of Pro-Life & Family Policy
Nebraska Catholic Conference
DATE: February 24, 2023
RE: LB606 (Nebraska Pregnancy Help Act) (Support)

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. I am here to express the Conference's support for LB606, the Nebraska Pregnancy Help Act.

Since before the founding of the nation, the Catholic Church in the United States has developed and run countless ministries to help those in need. In Nebraska, many of these ministries are local and parish-run, such as the countless St. Vincent de Paul Societies in our parishes that give direct financial assistance to those needing help. Catholic Social Services (in the Diocese of Lincoln) and Catholic Charities (in the Archdiocese of Omaha) provide food, clothing, immigration services, refugee resettlement, shelters for women experiencing domestic abuse, professional counseling and behavioral health services, and much more.

The Church, in Nebraska as well as nation- and worldwide, has also developed many ministries especially for expectant mothers and those who find it difficult to care for their children after they are born. All these ministries are an integral part of building a "culture of life."

One of the most rapidly growing of these ministries is "Walking with Moms in Need," a parish-based ministry sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to help open the eyes of parishioners to pregnant and parenting moms in their communities, helping them respond to Pope Francis' challenge to parishes to be "islands of mercy in a sea of indifference."¹

One of the chief partners of the "Walking with Moms" ministry is the network of good pregnancy help organizations (PHOs) that exist throughout the country and the state of Nebraska. Catholic parishes and Catholic social service agencies cooperate often with these organizations. Many of the women who come to PHOs asking for help have been referred by Catholic parishioners or social service agencies. Local Knights of Columbus councils raise money to buy the ultrasound technology in many of the PHOs around the country.

Pregnancy help organizations enable mothers to look to the future with hope and help to build a society where a woman never feels helpless tension between her own future and the life of her child. Their work for women and children will only become more important in a post-*Roe* world. We urge the committee to advance the Pregnancy Help Act to General File.

¹ Francis, Message for Lent, Manila, 2015.
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/len/documents/papa-francesco_20141004_messaggio-quaresima2015.html