

Chairman Dolan and members of the senate finance committee, thank you for the opportunity today to share with you my support for Senate Bill 159. I also want to thank Senator O'Brien for sponsoring this important legislation. My name is Savannah Marten, and I lead a pregnancy center in Toledo, Bella Vita Network. I also have the privilege of leading the Ohio Coalition of Pregnancy Centers, an informal coalition representing the 123 pregnancy centers across the state of Ohio.

Every day, across our great state, pregnancy centers turn their lights on to offer a range of medical services, support, case management, pregnancy, postpartum and parenting education, and material need support with items like diapers, formula, car seats, and other needed baby supplies. Most of these organizations are privately funded through individuals, foundations, businesses and churches in the communities the pregnancy centers serve.

According to a report published by Charlotte Lozier Institute, Ohio Pregnancy Centers in 2022 offered 23,329 pregnancy tests, 20,011 ultrasounds, 5,276 STI tests, and provided baby items, as mentioned above, to 28,214 moms and dads.

At Bella Vita Network, we are proud that when moms and dads are in need of support during their pregnancy that our community stands ready with the resources they need. Last year a mom was fleeing a domestic violence situation, because of free housing we are able to offer, we were able to safely house that mom the same day. In a matter of 3 months our case manager worked with her to secure permanent housing.

By creating a tax credit for donations to eligible nonprofit PRCs, as proposed by SB 159, the state is investing in a network that is providing high-quality health care to pregnant women. This care supplements other state programs, offsetting the cost of medical services that would otherwise be funded by taxpayers, most likely through increased emergency room and Medicaid usage. In 2019, From my experience, a community is marked by its' members rolling up their sleeves to care for others in their community, and this tax credit incentivizes those who don't sit by idly while people in their community struggle, but are willing to jump in and care. Those individuals and businesses that give financially to moms and dads who walk through the doors of pregnancy centers are ensuring that these families have access to support. Studies show that care and access to the demographics served by local pregnancy centers help reduce infant and maternal mortality rates, due to women being seen earlier in their pregnancies in a few pregnancy center.

7 years ago a young mom walked into our Center. She needed housing, addiction services, employment but also in that moment she needed someone to look her in the eyes, and say "you can do this". I had the privilege of being that voice for that young woman. Her eyes lit up hearing that, and we began to navigate the system to meet her needs. She gave birth to a son and thrived in motherhood. This past fall, I was volunteering at a local school. I felt someone squeeze my arm, and there was that mom dropping her son off for his first day of kindergarten. When you support legislation like this, you aren't just supporting local pregnancy centers, you

aren't just supporting moms and dads in need, your supporting little boys getting dropped off for their first day of school. Thank you.