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Against SSB 3145

We absolutely support extending Medicaid benefits to Iowa mothers who are six months postpartum and would be happy to support that in a separate bill.

However we cannot support this bill as it is.

Division I of this bill does not support women and fails to improve the health of Iowans. It is instead a way to integrate Crisis Pregnancy Centers into a costly, state-funded program with the stated goal of reducing abortions. Instead of contracting with ideological organization that mislead people and endanger their health, we should support comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care professionals who provide a full range of evidence-based counseling and quality medical care.

Crisis Pregnancy Centers lack medical credentials and are known to purposely coerce and mislead women into making decisions about their health care without receiving full information about their medical options and health status. Let's be clear – this is not a health care program for women in the state. When a woman has decided to have an abortion, she deserves to be able to access that care from a qualified medical provider without being tricked, judged or shamed. But Crisis Pregnancy Centers oppose abortion and judge, shame, and intentionally try to trick women out of getting the care they are seeking. We can all agree that every person deserves quality, medically accurate care when they're pregnant or thinks they might be. Lying to people to prevent them from accessing evidence-based medical care endangers their health.

Additionally, this proposed measure would funnel \$2 million in Iowa taxpayer money to fund a program modeled after a similar initiative in Texas that channels money to fake women's health centers. These centers are often religiously-affiliated and, as previously mentioned, are known for withholding critical medical information and misleading women. SSB 3145 uses the exact same language as a similar taxpayer-funded Texas program called Alternatives to Abortion. With lax oversight, the program ballooned from \$5 million to \$80 million under the leadership of Iowa's current Department of Human Services director Kelly Garcia, who formerly served as the Deputy Executive Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Since Texas' shutdown of its previous family planning program, nearly 45,000 Texas women have lost access to care – and another 39,000 have lost access to birth control. Meanwhile, the maternal mortality rate in Texas has doubled. This is clearly a copy and paste of Texas' "Alternatives to Abortion" program and is being pushed by someone who worked to eliminate access to abortion in Texas. The Texas program has been reported to spend most of its resources on "counseling" women rather than other services such as providing parenting classes or basic material goods. It has been reported that there is virtually no government oversight of the program in Texas and no accounting of costs or health care outcomes.

This is politics at its worst and Iowans deserve better.