

Despite Threats, Pro-Life Support Network Continues to Provide for Mothers Considering Abortion

The director of a pro-life pregnancy-center network says they have been ‘working for the past 26 years to create a safety net’ for the post-Roe era.



Pro-life networks like Real Alternatives have helped thousands of women across several states. (photo: Omar Lopez / Unsplash)

Since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last month, pro-life organizations have continued to serve pregnant women and their babies despite a spate of vandalism and intimidating attacks against them.

One such organization is Real Alternatives, a pro-life nonprofit that began in Pennsylvania in 1996 and has since helped thousands of women across several states facing unplanned pregnancies by providing counseling on alternatives to abortion and material resources such as baby formula and other necessities.

The director of the pro-life pregnancy-center network says they have been “working for the past 26 years to create a safety net” for the post-Roe era. Their counseling and material support services are available to mothers up to 12 months after they give birth.

“Luckily we have Catholic Charities and pregnancy support centers and maternity homes that are ready, willing and able to help as many women as necessary,” Kevin Bagatta, Real Alternatives’ founding CEO, told CNA in May.

Real Alternatives says more than 405,000 women in Pennsylvania and Indiana have been served since the program began in March 1996.

Bagatta said the overarching purpose of their network is to provide actual choices for women — namely birth, parenting, or adoption — who find themselves trapped by an unexpected pregnancy and pressured by others to abort, and empowering the women not to have to choose abortion.

He noted that research done in the 1980s found that about 80% of women who had procured an abortion who were surveyed said that they would not have gone through with the procedure if just one person had taken the time to help them. Thus, Real Alternatives’ counselors establish a trust relationship with each woman individually, he said.

Today, Real Alternatives receives over \$7.2 million in funding each year from the state of Pennsylvania. With that money, Real Alternatives funds Catholic charities, maternity homes, adoption agencies and pregnancy support centers to provide free services which include counseling, mentoring, case management, and more.

Bagatta says that based on an analysis using CDC formulas, the investment saved the state nearly \$200 million in fiscal year 2021. A large part of the savings comes from the preventative care that the network is able to provide for mothers and babies, such as prenatal care appointments and immunizations, he said.

Real Alternatives also helped the state of Texas create a similar program in the early 2000s, which has since grown to support more than 175 locations — crisis pregnancy centers, maternity homes, clinics, and more — all over the state.

Today, the Texas Pregnancy Care Network is funded entirely with general revenues from the state of Texas. In the fiscal year 2021, the organization was the program’s largest grantee, receiving \$36.6 million (nearly 80%) of the funds awarded that year. The Texas program is notable in part for the length of its continuum of care; women and men are not only eligible for their pro-life services during pregnancy, but for three years after birth of their child.

Along with other pro-life and Catholic organizations, the Texas Pregnancy Care Network has faced threats since the leaked draft *Dobbs* opinion signaled that the Supreme Court was going to overturn *Roe*.

Over Mother’s Day weekend, a pro-life pregnancy center in Denton, Texas called Loreto House was defaced with graffiti that read, “Not a clinic,” and “Forced pregnancy is murder.” Another women’s resource center, Woman to Woman Resource Center, also was vandalized. Both centers are part of the Texas Pregnancy Care Network.

Keywords: abortion archbishop gomez pro-life support network real alternatives

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