

Editorial: It's time women's care centers receive the support they deserve

It has been weeks since the U.S. Supreme Court declined to prevent Texas SB8 from going into effect. The law blocks most abortions after a fetal heartbeat can be detected and allows private citizens to sue those who "aid and abet" abortions. While such stories generally burn hot and are extinguished quickly, in this case, the media firestorm has continued to spread.

Commentators and pro-abortion politicians continue to wring their hands over the legislation that abortion providers say "would immediately and catastrophically reduce abortion access in Texas, barring care for at least 85% of Texas abortion patients (those who are six weeks pregnant or greater) and likely forcing many abortion clinics ultimately to close." According to Texas Health and Human Services, 54,741 unborn children were aborted in the state in 2020. If the abortion lobby is correct, the state's new law may save nearly 47,000 lives in a single year.

As this Editorial Board pointed out last week, the heavy media coverage of the Texas law has given pro-life supporters a rare opportunity outside of an election cycle to discuss [what abortion is and what abortion is not](#). Beyond that, it has provided an opportunity to address one of the main criticisms lobbed at those who advocate for the rights of the unborn – namely, that they do not care about the well-being of pregnant mothers or their children once they are born. Critics claim this despite the fact that there are nearly 2,500 pro-life crisis pregnancy centers in the United States that provide free or low-cost medical services (pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, prenatal care, etc.) and material aid (clothing,

diapers, formula, even housing).

Just days after the Texas abortion law went into effect, the Texas Catholic Conference – the policy arm of the state’s bishops – issued a statement trumpeting the Lone Star State’s funding of the Alternatives to Abortion program, a statewide program that was founded 16 years ago and served more than 100,000 pregnant women, families and children last year alone. According to the state, the program “promotes childbirth and provides support services to pregnant women and their families, adoptive parents, and parents who have experienced miscarriage or the loss of a child.” The Texas State Legislature has pledged \$100 million to fund the program over the next two years.

In contrast, President Joe Biden’s Justice Department announced Sept. 9 that it will sue Texas in an attempt to block the state’s abortion law. Biden, a Catholic, recently said that he does not agree with the Church that human life begins at conception – a reversal from his previous public position. This isn’t the first time he has changed course on the matter when it became politically advantageous to do so. Until 2019, he supported the Hyde Amendment, which blocked federal tax dollars from being used to pay for abortions. Instead of federally funding abortions, how many lives could be saved if politicians from both parties encouraged government at all levels to give pregnant women the support they need to keep and raise their children?

For far too long, local women’s care centers have been forced to do this important work on shoestring budgets made possible largely by proceeds from silent auctions, charity golf outings and the like. And yet they still save countless lives. Imagine their reach if these centers were supported by lawmakers from both sides of the aisle. Even politicians who advocate for legal abortion claim that, in an ideal world, women should feel supported enough that they should never feel compelled to have an abortion. While it might seem like a pipe dream in

today's political climate, this is a cause that should bring Democrats and Republicans together to make this a reality.

Advocating for an end to legal abortion continues to be of the utmost importance, but it's also past time that we call upon our local, state and federal governments to fully support programs that provide tangible assistance to mothers who might otherwise choose abortion. We as the Body of Christ – both the institutional Church and individual disciples of Jesus – are called to remind lawmakers that each child killed by abortion is a tragedy that could be prevented if only they prioritized people – born and unborn – over politics.

Our Sunday Visitor Editorial Board: Gretchen R. Crowe, Scott P. Richert, Scott Warden, York Young