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Amendment Improves Support for Mothers & Babies Act

On Thursday, March 27, the House passed HB 2456 by a vote of 96-0, which amended the Support for Mothers and Babies Act. This is one of two priority legislative agenda items for West Virginians for Life in the current session, and the support it had was truly outstanding. “There has never been a more exciting time to be pro-life in West Virginia! Nearly all mothers and babies are protected from abortion, which allows us to shift our focus from passing laws that protect them from the abortion industry to providing women with what they need to support themselves and their babies,” said West Virginians for Life Legislative Director Sadie Keaton.

The Support for Mothers and Babies Program, which the Legislature created in 2023, now serves West Virginians in all 55 counties and has brought in over 4,000 new clients to pro-life pregnancy help organizations. Last year, through this vehicle, the Legislature graciously granted \$3 million dollars in funding for pro-life pregnancy help organizations. Pregnancy resource centers, maternity homes, and family support networks have registered to receive funding to better serve their communities. None of these organizations refer for, commit, or in any way support the abortion industry.

As originally passed, the Support for Mothers and Babies Program distributed funds on a fee-for-service basis, meaning that the pregnancy help organization had to first provide the service, and then seek reimbursement. This worked well for established organizations. However, the funds were not available for start-up costs to establish new centers, nor for things like the purchase of an ultrasound machine, or the repair of a roof on a maternity home. HB 2456 remedies this problem, by adding eligible expenses to the program. It allows distributions to cover facility needs, training costs of staff and volunteers, and other large capital expenditures necessary to expand services.

“Pregnancy help organizations provide vital care to women and families, and I am proud to be the lead sponsor of this essential pro-life legislation to help the Mothers and Babies Support Program,” said Delegate Clay Riley. As Delegate Lisa White remarked from the floor, “Being pro-life isn’t just about opposing abortion, it’s also about providing real support for women and men in crisis.”

West Virginians for Life, the state affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee, is the state’s largest pro-life group with more than 30 local pro-life chapters. West Virginians for Life works through education, legislation, and political action to protect those threatened by abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia.

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