



Small Acts, Big Changes

How the “Choose Life” Plate Will Save Lives in North Carolina

written by:
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THERE IS A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING.¹ THIS PUBLIC POLICY SEASON, BOTH NATIONALLY AND ON THE STATE LEVEL, HAS SEEN LAWMAKERS COURAGEOUSLY PASS LEGISLATION THAT EMPOWERS WOMEN TO CHOOSE LIFE. EARLY IN 2011, CONGRESSMAN MIKE PENCE (R-IN) TOOK ON THE LARGEST PROVIDER OF ABORTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, PLANNED PARENTHOOD. AS HE PRESENTED HIS CASE TO HIS COLLEAGUES, REP. PENCE SAID, “THIS IS THE MOMENT ... I URGE MY COLLEAGUES TO TAKE A STAND FOR TAXPAYERS ... AND TAKE A STAND FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN CRISIS PREGNANCIES WHO DESERVE ACCESS TO UNBIASED AND COMPASSIONATE HEALTH SERVICES.”² ON FEBRUARY 18, 2011, THE “PENCE AMENDMENT,” WHICH WOULD BAN PLANNED PARENTHOOD FROM RECEIVING ANY FEDERAL FUNDING, PASSED THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WITH BIPARTISAN SUPPORT.

On the statewide front, North Carolina lawmakers followed suit, first by defunding Planned Parenthood in the North Carolina state budget,³ and then by

passing both H.B. 854—Abortion-Woman’s Right to Know Act⁴, and H.B. 289—Authorize Various Special Plates (including the “Choose Life” plate) this session. These victories will result in many saved lives, as North Carolinians will be better equipped to choose life because they have the vital information required to help them be informed, and the financial resources to see that decision through.

The “Choose Life” plates will raise money for those pregnancy resource centers that qualify and apply to the Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship (CPCF) annually. Pregnancy Support Services of Wake Forest is an example of one type of organization that can benefit from the funds collected from “Choose Life” plates.

PSSWF

Zoom into Wake Forest, North Carolina. In a quaint little office complex right off the highway, there is a discrete sign for Pregnancy Support Services of Wake Forest (PSSWF). All is seemingly ordinary, until the second office door opens. A woman with a kind voice and demeanor is greeting various clients and their families while intermittently an-

How To Sign Up For A Choose Life Plate

1. Fill out the application found on page 16 or download one from ncfamily.org. Be sure to fill out a separate application for each vehicle for which you would like a “Choose Life” plate.
2. Send application and check for \$25 (\$55 for a personalized plate), made out to CPCF. Mail these to: Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship PO Box 3888 Charlotte, NC 28278.
3. The check will be deposited into a special account until the 300-application threshold is met. After the initial 300, applications will be handled directly by the DMV. Keep sending applications and checks to the CPCF unless you hear otherwise—if they have reached the required amount, they will act as the conduit and forward on the applications and fees to the DMV.
4. In future years, applications will be available directly from the DMV website.

swering the influx of phone calls from nervous and frightened women seeking help. She schedules their appointments and answers the callers’ many questions with patience and grace. To the left, amongst books, toys, and magazines, women and their families or friends wait for their turn to be called back for their appointments. They may be scared about the outcome of the potentially life-changing news they will receive with a pregnancy test, but with each moment they sit in this safe place, their future seems less and less dismal. Women are not just showing up at Pregnancy Support Services in Wake Forest for the result of a single pregnancy test. They wait there for hope.

Amber Lehman, the Chief Executive Officer for PSSWF, is more than equipped for her job. “I had an unplanned pregnancy when I was fifteen, and just after my sixteenth birthday, I chose abortion,” she shares. “And I did it very uninformed.”⁵ Amber is the daughter of a single mother who vowed to support any decision she chose. “At a time when I wasn’t even allowed to choose my own school schedule, I chose whether or not to give life,”⁶ Amber states. Eight years after this event, she became a believer in Jesus Christ. Attesting to her regeneration, Amber explains, “After about a month of being a believer, I realized that I had taken human life.”⁷ Shortly after this realization, an employee from PSSWF came to her local church to provide information about the services and needs of that specific center. Amber willingly rose to the call and was quickly trained as a regular volunteer to fundraise for them. After her training, she submitted her resume for a 10-hour a-week fundraising position, only to be interviewed for, and receive, the Chief Executive Officer position instead. “My passion is that women would be able to make an informed decision, that they wouldn’t feel pressured, that they wouldn’t feel judgment, that they would have

a safe place to really work through the issues they are presented with, and to know that if they want to choose life, that they will have every resource available to them to do that successfully,” Amber says. “That’s what the goal of the pregnancy resource center is—to ensure that these women have every resource possible to choose life, and if they don’t choose life, that they would have a safe place to find healing from that decision.”⁸

For a woman faced with the unknown nature of an unplanned pregnancy, there are several factors and obstacles that must be identified by the PSSWF staff in order to help them work through the decision making process. A woman may feel torn between the opinions of her family, the father, friends, popular culture, television, financial stressors, future dreams or goals, and her skill, or lack there of, in parenting. For each element that causes division in the mind of a woman faced with unplanned pregnancy, PSSWF offers to counter with truth. Truth, however, comes at a high price.

For each woman that walks in for services and medical consultation, it costs the center on average between \$600 and \$1,000 to serve them. Pregnancy Support Services of Wake Forest has a couple additional projects on the horizon that are aimed at helping them better serve the women in crisis in their area. They hope to open a second location in Henderson, NC, as well as, a third “location,” which will be a mobile ultrasound housed in an RV. The cost to launch this mobile ultrasound location is estimated to be \$80,000, which must be raised in addition to their already conservative general budget of \$400,000. A steady stream of donations helps ensure that this facility can continue to train their staff well and keep the doors open for women battling unplanned pregnancies.

Theologian, evangelical intellectual, and author, Dr. Al Mohler, recently wrote, “*Crisis pregnancy centers deserve the support of all who cherish the sanctity of life, the defense of the unborn, and the right of free speech.*” PSSWF is just a snapshot of one of many of these ministries in North Carolina. Though all pregnancy resource centers are independent and autonomous facilities, they all offer similar services for little or no cost to the women facing life-changing decisions. Though money is part of the means in reaching women in crisis, awareness is also required.

“Choose Life” Plate Logistics

With the passage of the “Choose Life” plate legislation, more awareness can be accomplished. Though the state of North Carolina offers many specialty plates, the “Choose Life” plate was caught in a political battle for nearly a decade. Even this session, the “Choose Life” plate survived multiple attempts by legislators to amend the bill language, including several amendments that would have also raised funds for Planned Parenthood. However, lawmakers courageously resisted these attempts,

and H.B. 289—Authorize Various Special Plates (including the “Choose Life” plate), passed, thanks in large part to the efforts of a number of pro-life activists in the state. The “Choose Life” plate’s availability means two very important things for the pro-life movement in North Carolina: 1) The message of love, life, and hope will be ever more present and widespread as pro-life citizens proudly bear the encouraging message to “Choose Life” on their cars; and 2) Funds generated by the sale of the plates will provide financial aid to pregnancy resource centers across North Carolina.

Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship

One of North Carolina’s most ardent pro-life workers is Bobbie Meyer. Bobbie has a perpetual joy in her voice when she talks about the practical applications of the “Choose Life” plate. As the Director of the Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship (CPCF), she is in the center of the hustle and bustle as North Carolinians send in their applications and checks for their own “Choose Life” plate. Bobbie, and others with the CPCF, are proud to announce that when this article went to print, they have received applications for 240 “Choose Life” plates. The CPCF is responsible for collecting the initial 300 plate applications and fees. After they meet the 300-application threshold, the DMV takes over the responsibility and begins the printing and distribution process.

For those pregnancy resource centers across the state of North Carolina that will receive a portion of the funds generated from the sale of the plates, these “Choose Life” plates will serve as moving billboards supporting their work. As cars pass by clad in their “Choose Life” plates, they will encourage and remind the staff of these centers that what they do is important and that many people are behind their efforts. For those unfamiliar with the cause, it may plant a seed of interest to conduct research about important life-related issues. This seed of interest could very well be planted in the mind of a woman who, unbeknownst to her, may encounter an unplanned pregnancy in the future. And seeds planted around this state, God-willing, will reap a great harvest.

In addition to fostering awareness, the affiliates of the CPCF will see additional positive results from this legislation, as the CPCF Board continues to receive and distribute the money raised by the purchase of these plates to the affiliated centers statewide. “Funds from ‘Choose Life’ license plates will help centers reach more women and provide much-needed revenue to purchase supplies, expand staff hours, and implement programs such as fatherhood training or ultrasound services,” Bobbie explains.¹⁰ The money accumulated from these plates will undoubtedly change and help save individual

“It may plant a seed of interest to conduct research about important life-related issues.”

lives, but the dream remains that this monetary support for pregnancy resource centers, will become the very catalyst to change this state altogether.

Bobbie is hopeful that North Carolinians across the state will see the importance of this small act that will do big things. “Through the decades that I was involved as a pregnancy center director, I experienced the heart of God reaching through the volunteers and staff to touch the mind and heart of a woman and turn her toward a path of life rather than destruction,” she explains.¹¹ “Now as the state director of CPCF, I have the privilege of equipping, encouraging, and assisting in networking many centers ... and seeing the bigger picture forming all across North Carolina.”¹²

The Bigger Picture

Eva Ritchey, president of the North Carolina Pro-Life Democrats, sees the bigger picture as something that can only be seen by North Carolina citizens if those who believe in life continue to fight for it. She explains, “I want to see everyone treated fairly and to have the highest quality of life possible. That includes the unborn. Once we start devaluing human life at one stage, it is quite easy to devalue it in any stage and in different circumstances. Personally, that puts my life in jeopardy as well. Will my children decide to end my life prematurely? Will the State decide that my life is a burden and end it prematurely? I have a responsibility to my Creator to value the life He has made.”¹³ That responsibility is something that comes to the fore during every election. Joseph Bottum, the editor of *First Things*, explains,

After every election, out in full howl come the voices declaring that the fight over abortion is over. And, after every election, those voices prove wrong. That’s because, in the long run, the fight will never be over until the slaughter of the unborn ceases. And it’s also because the supporters of abortion will not rest with their electoral victory.¹⁴

It may seem naive to think that a little license plate could help stop this silent genocide forever. But just as God used the trumpets of Gideon to achieve victory over the Midianites—who is to say that He cannot bring victory again partly through the “Choose Life” license plates.¹⁵ ❖

Kami Mueller, M.A. is communications manager for the North Carolina Family Policy Council. For a footnoted version of this article, please visit ncfamily.org.

Initially, 300 applications and fees must be collected before the plate will be manufactured. Please send app. with check to CPCF:

Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship
 PO Box 3888
 Charlotte NC 28278
 Questions? directorcpcf@aol.com

- 1) Your check will be deposited in a special account until all 300 applications have been submitted. After the initial 300, applications will be handled directly by the DMV.
- 2) Please include your email address. This will be our primary progress communication link.
- 3) CPCF is the legally designated agency for disbursement of plate funds.
www.ncchoose-life.org YOUR EMAIL _____

APPLICATION FOR A CHOOSE LIFE LICENSE PLATE

Remit a \$25.00/\$55.00 check or money order with this application.

Regular Choose Life \$25.00

Personalized Choose Life \$55.00

NOTE: You are allowed four (4) spaces for a personalized message. _____

When applying for a Personalized Choose Life license plate, the prefix/suffix will be the first/last letters on the plate. This leaves only four (4) spaces for a Personalized message. The four spaces may be a combination of letters and numbers, but cannot be numbers only. Choice cannot conflict with another class of license plates.

The \$25.00/\$55.00 special fee is an (ANNUAL) fee due in addition to the regular license fee.

Home _____ AREA CODE-TELEPHONE NUMBER	NAME(To agree with certificate of title) _____ <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> FIRST MIDDLE LAST </div>		
Office _____ AREA CODE-TELEPHONE NUMBER	_____ ADDRESS		
	_____ CITY	_____ STATE	_____ ZIP CODE
	Current North Carolina _____ Plate Number	_____ Vehicle Identification Number	
	_____ Driver License #	_____ Year	_____ Model
		_____ Make	_____ Body Style

Owner's Certification of Liability Insurance

I CERTIFY FOR THE MOTOR VEHICLE DESCRIBED ABOVE THAT I HAVE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS REQUIRED BY LAW.

 PRINT OR TYPE FULL NAME OF INSURANCE COMPANY AUTHORIZED IN N.C. – NOT AGENCY OR GROUP

 POLICY NUMBER – IF POLICY NOT ISSUED, NAME OF AGENCY BINDING COVERAGE

SIGNATURE OF OWNER

DATE OF CERTIFICATION

ENDNOTES:

- 1) The Holy Bible. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.
- 2) <http://www.lifenews.com/2011/02/18/mike-pences-comments-supporting-planned-parenthood-de-funding/> accessed 8-23-11.
- 3) North Carolina State Budget (SL 2011—0145), Page 101, Section 10.19.
- 4) <http://www.ncfamily.org/stories/110408s1.html> accessed 8-23-11
- 5) Kami Mueller conducted a personal interview with Amber Lehman, CEO of Pregnancy Support Services Wake Forest. 8-22-11, 3:00 pm EST.
- 6) Ibid.
- 7) Ibid.
- 8) Ibid.
- 9) <http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/08/05/the-culture-of-death-grows-desperate-war-declared-on-crisis-pregnancy-centers/> Accessed on 8-18-11. Header line.
- 10) A personal email interview with Bobbie Meyer, 08-24-11, by Kami Mueller.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) A personal email interview with Eva Ritchey, 8-16-11, Kami Mueller
- 14) <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2009/01/001-abortion-after-obama-8> accessed on 8-18-11.
- 15) The Holy Bible. Judges 6-8.