



Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
Written and Oral Testimony in Opposition of Senate Bill 498

March 5, 2024

Chairperson Tyson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you to the Chair and Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony on SB 498.

Trust Women Foundation is a health care provider in Kansas and Oklahoma with a mission to provide and protect access to abortion care for our communities. We offer comprehensive reproductive health care, as well as gender-affirming care, HIV treatment, HEP-C testing and treatment, and other sexual health services. We stand in strong opposition to Senate Bill 498.

SB 498 is another attempt by anti-abortion organizations to use state power to subsidize the unregulated network of crisis pregnancy centers across the state. Contributors to these centers will enjoy tax credits for their financial support, effectively counteracting the tax support otherwise granted to public health organizations—even allowing single-year contributions to exceed the taxpayer’s tax liability (counting against what they owe the state) for up to five years.

This bill, if approved, could reduce state income revenues by over \$800 million. SB 498 should properly be seen as a diversion of taxpayer dollars, not a tax credit. By diverting these resources into unaccountable anti-abortion centers, this bill is an attempt to refute the desires of Kansans to have meaningful access to legitimate healthcare options provided by reputable doctors. Unfortunately, most clinicians, doctors, and critically important community health organizations will be ineligible to receive support through this tax credit.

If sponsors of this bill wish to improve the health outcomes for pregnant people and their families, there is no sound medical reason to exclude community health clinics, doulas, primary care physicians, or even most OB-GYNs from the support granted in SB 498. Exclusion of such facilities and providers suggests the authors of this bill do not want pregnant people to have access to all choices, information, or resources, except those that support their own personal aversions to abortions. This is a bad policy solution in search of a problem and not a good reason to create effort after effort to defund much-needed state resources.

By continuing to exclude not only abortion providers but also any organization or medical provider who may merely refer for abortions, the sponsors of SB 498 are deliberately excluding whole communities of care that already exist and have capacity that no pregnancy resource center comes close to replicating, even in combination with their cohort across the state.



The sponsors of these bills are deliberately ignoring a clear and important fact: abortion providers and medical professionals who correctly view abortions as an essential part of reproductive health care are far better positioned to point people to essential resources *even when abortions are not part of that patient's care plan*. We see more people, do more community work, and are more trusted by our community partners to support positive health outcomes. We can make these commitments without receiving state funding directly or through tax subsidies.

Rather than lose focus with smaller, less effective programs, the legislature could bring attention and resources to several already existing state and community programs that would directly benefit our communities:

- Support birthing centers,
- Remove barriers to contraception access, including emergency contraception,
- Support expanded access to doula and midwifery care by integrating midwives into maternity care and removing restrictive laws and regulations,
- Advocate for equitable maternal health care that ensures pregnant people can give birth in a supportive environment and have health coverage to ensure they can afford their care,
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement for abortion and other key sexual and reproductive health care services to improve access equity and health outcomes.

Overall, the Trust Women Foundation opposes the passage of SB 498, and we encourage thoughtful consideration of the above factors when evaluating the proposed legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ASellers', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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