



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 4, 2025

Lawsuit Convinces Vermont to Amend Law Targeting Pro-life Pregnancy Centers

Vermont pro-life pregnancy centers are declaring victory after a federal lawsuit they filed prodded state lawmakers into amending a law targeting them.

No-choice Act

In May 2023, the Vermont Legislature passed and Republican Governor Phil Scott signed SB 37, a healthcare act primarily furthering two pet causes of the modern Left: transgenderism and abortion.

Section 8 of the law was an undisguised effort at hampering, if not shuttering, pregnancy centers under the pretense of protecting “pregnant individuals” from those centers’ allegedly harmful practices. This has become a [favorite tactic](#) of pro-abortion politicians in recent years, proving that they were never really interested in “choice” — unless that choice was to abort.

Section 8 solely concerns the regulation of “limited-services pregnancy centers,” which it defines as pregnancy centers that do “not directly provide, or provide referrals to clients for, abortions or emergency contraception.”

The law claims that “some” pregnancy centers

provide confusing and misleading information to pregnant individuals contemplating abortion by leading those individuals to believe that their facilities offer abortion services and unbiased counseling. Some limited-services pregnancy centers have promoted patently false or biased medical claims about abortion, pregnancy, contraception, and reproductive health care providers.

Fortunately, abortion providers never tell falsehoods such as, say, the abortion pill is [“safer than Tylenol.”](#) Thus, Vermont legislators had only to mandate that pro-life pregnancy centers tell the truth — as lawmakers see it — to ensure that no pregnant woman in the Green Mountain State is ever duped again.

To that end, Section 8 imposed two major restrictions on “limited-services pregnancy centers.” First, it prohibited such facilities, in their advertising, from making “untrue” or “mislead[ing]” claims about the services they provide, under the threat of a \$10,000 fine for noncompliance. Second, it threatened pregnancy centers’ on-site healthcare providers with penalties for failing “to conduct or to ensure that health care services, information, and counseling at the limited-services pregnancy services center are



mmpile/iStock/Getty Images Plus



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 4, 2025

conducted in accordance with State law and professional standards of practice.” It arguably even required centers to employ licensed providers.

Section 8 Grousing

Recognizing the threat, two Vermont pregnancy centers and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, a nationwide association of pregnancy centers, sued the state in federal court in July 2023. Represented by attorneys from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the plaintiffs contended that the law violated the First Amendment (because of its “viewpoint- and content-based regulation of pure speech”) and the 14th Amendment (because of its vagueness).

“The advertising prohibition,” noted the [lawsuit](#), “does not define ‘misleading.’” Deciding what constitutes “misleading” advertising is left to the state attorney general’s discretion. That could result in centers being forced to advertise that they neither provide nor refer for abortions, which would be compelled speech. It could also chill centers’ speech since they can never know what may run afoul of the attorney general’s interpretation of the law. Indeed, the two centers suing the state had already refrained from informing clients about abortion-pill reversal because Section 6 of SB 37 declares it “unprofessional conduct” for a healthcare provider to “provid[e] or claim[] to provide services or medications that are purported to reverse the effects of a medication abortion.”

The “provider restriction” is even vaguer. It does not define “health care services,” “information,” or “counseling,” again leaving pregnancy centers at the attorney general’s mercy. It appears to prohibit anyone but licensed healthcare providers from having any interaction with pregnancy-center clients. “Under the provider restriction,” observed the complaint, “if a pregnancy center staff member who is not a licensed healthcare provider so much as discusses a client’s pregnancy (a health condition) with her, the unlicensed provider has arguably violated the law.” This could also force pregnancy centers to keep a licensed provider on staff.

Prohibition Repealed

Of course, the law’s prohibitions are all based on the demonstrably false notion that pregnancy centers are predatory. Noted the lawsuit:

Unlike abortion clinics, which have a financial interest in performing as many abortions as possible, most pro-life pregnancy centers ... charge nothing for their services, meaning that they do not financially benefit from any choice a woman makes.

The medical journal *Contraception* published a [study](#) showing that pro-life pregnancy centers offer more efficient help at a lower cost than abortion facilities. It found that pro-life pregnancy centers have shorter wait times and are more available for same-day care. It also states that abortion facilities almost always charge for pregnancy tests and ultrasounds — while pro-life centers almost always offer these services for free.

For both Care Net and Heartbeat International (two pregnancy center associations representing about 2,100 centers), client exit surveys show a 99% satisfaction rate.

The Legislature — which should have seen the writing on the wall when even Planned Parenthood testified against including Section 8 — ultimately capitulated to the legal threat and amended SB 37 accordingly. ADF then filed a [stipulated dismissal](#) of the case.



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on June 4, 2025

In a [press release](#), ADF legal counsel Julia Payne Koon said:

Women who become unexpectedly pregnant should know they have life-affirming options available to them, from emotional support to practical resources, which is exactly what our clients offer. We're pleased that Vermont recognized it needed to amend its discriminatory law that unlawfully targeted faith-based pregnancy centers and restricted their ability to speak and act according to their conscience. Pregnancy centers must be free to serve and empower women and their families by offering the support they need without fear of unjust government punishment.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.