



Brief: Fund Life-Affirming Choices

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Key Points:

1. Catholics are called to respect life and care for the defenseless.
2. *Alternatives to Abortion* has helped over 200,000 families choose life.
3. We support HB 3873 to maintain and expand the *Alternatives* program.

A Catholic perspective: The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops supports increased funding to abortion alternatives for expectant parents. As Pope Benedict wrote, “Children truly are the family’s greatest treasure and most precious good.”^[1] Yet parents are sometimes troubled or burdened with the news that they are expecting a child. We should understand more about their daily struggle so that we can effectively help them care for their families and thereby become witnesses of moral strength for us all.^[2]

Texans and Catholics have a duty to help families make life-affirming choices, and we cannot ignore the circumstances under which a woman may be pressured to have an abortion.^[3] Circumstances such as abuse, poverty, and lack of support must be included in the conversation when discussing pro-life legislation. We support programs intended to remedy those circumstances, as well as promote adoption as a legitimate option for families who cannot care for their children.

Texas law and policy: Texas legislators established the Alternatives to Abortion (A2A) program in 2005 and currently operates using funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Revenue.^[4] The Alternatives program contracts with two

agencies providing support to new families, one of which is the Texas Pregnancy Care Network (TPCN). TPCN is a network of adoption agencies, residential care facilities, pregnancy resource centers (PRCs), and social service providers. The network provides:

- counseling and mentoring;
- material goods such as car seats, clothes, diapers, and formula;
- education regarding pregnancy and parenting;
- maternity home support groups; and
- referral to and enrollment in other social services.^[5]

Eligibility is extended to any pregnant woman or adoptive parent for:

- 3 years after birth;
- 3 years after adoption, regardless of the child’s age; or
- 90 days after miscarriage or the loss of a child.^[6]

As a result, the TPCN continuity of care extends for 45 months.^[7] In FY 2017-18, TPCN supported the work of 135 subcontractors in 218 of the state’s 254 counties, serving in counties which account for 99% of Texas abortions.^[8] Since its creation, TPCN has served a total of 219,073 women, adoptive parents, and other clients.^[9] We support **HB 3873**, which

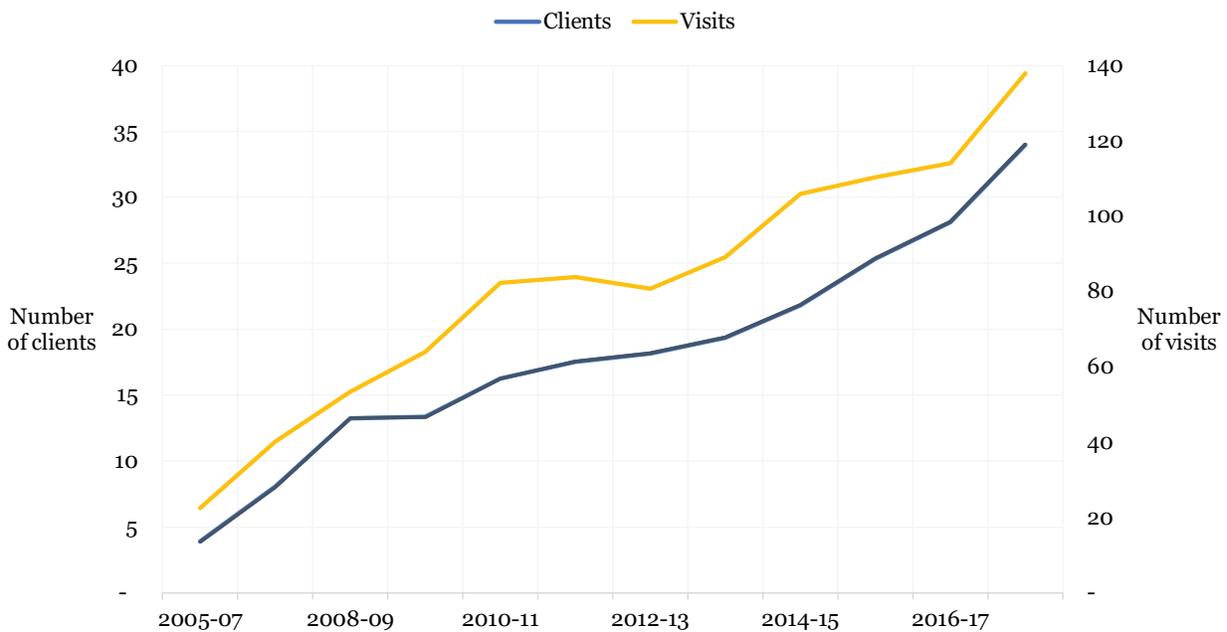
would expand the A2A program and show that Texas legislators have a strong dedication to supporting women, children, and families.

Call to action: To support this proposal in the Texas legislature, please visit txcatholic.org/life to find and contact your lawmaker. Please also pray for Texas and for our legislators, that they

may respect innocent life and care for the weak and defenseless.

The TCCB is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses and ordinariates in Texas. There are 8 million Catholics living in our state. To contact us, call our office at 512-339-9882 or find TXCatholic on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Figure 1: TPCN number of clients and client visits, in thousands (FY 2005 - 2018)



TPCN, *Annual Report to Health and Human Services Commission*, FY 2017-18. Page 7.

Endnotes

1. Pope Benedict XVI, *Address at a Meeting on Family and Life Issues in Latin America*. (Dec. 3, 2005), Sec. 5.
2. Pope Francis, *General Audience*. (Jan. 7, 2015).
3. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), *Quaestio de abortu [Declaration on Procured Abortion]*, The Vatican. (November 18, 1974), Sec. 26.
4. 79 RS [SB 1 ENR](#). Page II-111; Texas Health and Human Services, *Alternatives to Abortion*. (Dec. 2017), Page 6.
5. *Ibid.*, *Alternatives to Abortion*, page 3; TPCN, *FY 2017-18 Annual Report to Health and Human Services Commission*. (FY 2017-18), Page 11.
6. *Ibid.*
7. TPCN, *FY 2017-18 Annual Report*. Page 2.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.* Page 8.