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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 4601

03/07/2024 Authored by Zeleznikar, Knudsen, Engen, Mueller, Skraba and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Health Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to health; establishing a program to provide grants to women's pregnancy
1.3 centers and maternity homes; reducing an appropriation; appropriating money;
1.4 proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 145.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. TITLE.

1.7 This act shall be known as the "Supporting Women Act."

1.8 Sec. 2. [145.9235] GRANT PROGRAM FOR WOMEN'S PREGNANCY CENTERS
1.9 AND MATERNITY HOMES.

1.10 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have
1.11 the meanings given.

1.12 (b) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of health.

1.13 (c) "Maternity home" means a community-based, supervised group housing setting that
1.14 provides housing, information, referrals, and support to pregnant women who are in crisis
1.15 or facing homelessness and to women after giving birth and their children.

1.16 (d) "Women's pregnancy center" means an organization that provides information,
1.17 referrals, and support to encourage and assist pregnant women in carrying their pregnancies
1.18 to term and in caring for their children after birth.

1.19 Subd. 2. Grant program established. The commissioner shall administer a program
1.20 to provide grants to maternity homes and to women's pregnancy centers to fund housing,

2.1 services, and assistance to help pregnant women in carrying their pregnancies to term and
2.2 in caring for their children after birth.

2.3 Subd. 3. **Eligibility for grants.** (a) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a women's
2.4 pregnancy center or maternity home must:

2.5 (1) be a nonprofit organization;

2.6 (2) offer programs and services, or referrals for programs and services, to pregnant
2.7 women and women who recently gave birth to support, encourage, and assist them in carrying
2.8 their pregnancies to term and in caring for their children after birth;

2.9 (3) if housing is provided, provide housing free of charge;

2.10 (4) provide any programs or services free of charge or at reduced cost; and

2.11 (5) not use any grant funds to:

2.12 (i) encourage or counsel women to have an abortion not necessary to prevent her death;

2.13 (ii) provide abortions; or

2.14 (iii) directly refer women to an abortion provider for an abortion.

2.15 (b) The following organizations are not eligible for a grant under this section:

2.16 (1) an organization that provides abortions, promotes abortions, or directly refers women
2.17 to an abortion provider for an abortion; and

2.18 (2) an organization that is an affiliate of an organization described in clause (1), unless
2.19 the two organizations are separately incorporated and independent of each other.

2.20 Subd. 4. **Uses of grant funds.** (a) A women's pregnancy center receiving a grant under
2.21 this section must use the grant funds for programs and services to support, encourage, and
2.22 assist pregnant women in carrying their pregnancies to term and in caring for their children
2.23 after birth.

2.24 (b) A maternity home receiving a grant under this section must use the grant funds for
2.25 housing, supervision, and programs and services to support, encourage, and assist pregnant
2.26 women in carrying their pregnancies to term and in caring for their children after birth.

2.27 (c) A women's pregnancy center or maternity home may provide programs and services
2.28 directly or may refer women to other organizations for programs and services. Programs
2.29 and services to support, encourage, and assist pregnant women and women who recently
2.30 gave birth may address medical care, information about the developmental characteristics
2.31 of babies and unborn children, nutrition services, mental health care and treatment, substance

3.1 use disorder treatment, housing assistance, adoption services, education and employment
 3.2 assistance, financial literacy, communications skills, child care assistance, and parenting
 3.3 education and support services.

3.4 Subd. 5. **Privacy protections.** (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), a women's
 3.5 pregnancy center or maternity home receiving a grant under this section must have a privacy
 3.6 policy and procedures in place to ensure that the name, address, telephone number, or other
 3.7 information that might identify a woman seeking the services of the women's pregnancy
 3.8 center or maternity home is not made public or shared with any other agency or organization
 3.9 without the written consent of the woman. All communications between the women's
 3.10 pregnancy center or maternity home and the woman must remain confidential. For purposes
 3.11 of any medical care provided by the women's pregnancy center or maternity home, including
 3.12 but not limited to pregnancy tests or ultrasonic scanning, the women's pregnancy center or
 3.13 maternity home must adhere to the requirements in sections 144.291 to 144.298 that apply
 3.14 to providers before releasing any information relating to the medical care provided.

3.15 (b) A grant recipient must provide the commissioner with any information requested by
 3.16 the commissioner for purposes of subdivision 6.

3.17 Subd. 6. **Monitoring and review.** The commissioner must:

3.18 (1) collect from grant recipients information necessary to evaluate and administer the
 3.19 grant program; and

3.20 (2) monitor and review each grant recipient's program to ensure compliance with this
 3.21 section.

3.22 Sec. 3. **REDUCTION IN APPROPRIATION.**

3.23 The general fund appropriation in Laws 2023, chapter 70, article 20, section 3, subdivision
 3.24 2, for sexual and reproductive health services grants under Minnesota Statutes, section
 3.25 145.925, is reduced by \$4,500,000 in fiscal year 2025, and that amount is canceled to the
 3.26 general fund on June 30, 2024. The general fund base for this appropriation is reduced by
 3.27 \$4,500,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$4,500,000 in fiscal year 2027.

3.28 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

3.29 Sec. 4. **APPROPRIATION.**

3.30 \$4,500,000 in fiscal year 2025 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner
 3.31 of health for the grant program for women's pregnancy centers and maternity homes under
 3.32 Minnesota Statutes, section 145.9235. Of this appropriation:

- 4.1 (1) \$3,000,000 is for grants to women's pregnancy centers and administration of those
- 4.2 grants; and
- 4.3 (2) \$1,500,000 is for grants to maternity homes and administration of those grants.