

■ ‘Choose Life’ License Plates

BACKGROUND: In recent years, a handful of states have established specialty “Choose Life” license plates. The plates cost anywhere between \$25 and \$70 on top of standard fees. In some cases, money generated from their sale directly supports the activities of specific antichoice organizations or crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs), which often provide biased and medically inaccurate counseling to women seeking a pregnancy test or counseling with regard to an unintended pregnancy. In other cases, the funding goes to organizations that provide services related to adoption. Many of the states with “Choose Life” license plates explicitly prohibit organizations that offer a full range of services, including abortion counseling or referral, from receiving the funds. Reproductive health activists have challenged some of these policies, arguing that it is unconstitutional for a state to endorse one political viewpoint over another, and that the funding of agencies affiliated with churches or religious organizations amounts to establishment of religion.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 21 states allow production of “Choose Life” license plates.
 - 11 of the states donate a portion of the proceeds raised to specific antichoice organizations or CPCs.
 - 14 of the states donate a portion of the proceeds to agencies or organizations that provide adoption assistance, counseling, training or advertising.
 - 8 states specifically prohibit the allocation of funds raised by the sale of “Choose Life” license plates to agencies or organizations that provide abortion services, counseling, referrals or advertising.



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STATE	FUNDS EXPLICITLY GO TO:		FUNDS CANNOT GO TO AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ABORTION COUNSELING OR REFERRAL
	Antichoice Organizations/CPCs	Organizations Providing Adoption/Maternity Services	
Alabama	X	X	
Arizona	X		
Arkansas		X	X
Connecticut		X	
Florida		X	X
Georgia		X	
Hawaii	X		X
Indiana		X	X
Kentucky	X*		
Louisiana		X	X
Maryland	X		X
Mississippi		X	
Missouri	X	X	
Montana	X		
Ohio		X	X
Oklahoma†		X	X
Pennsylvania	X	X	
South Carolina	X		
South Dakota		X	
Tennessee	X	X	
Virginia	X		
TOTAL	11	14	8

▼ Enforcement permanently enjoined by court order; policy not in effect.

* A voluntary contribution can be made to CPCs in Kentucky when a person applies for or renews their 'Choose Life' plate, however, an applicant can obtain a 'Choose Life' license plate without making a contribution.

† The state also approved a "Respect Life Support Adoption" license plate to provide assistance to families seeking to adopt children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For information on state legislative and policy activity click on Guttmacher's [Monthly State Update](#) and for state level information and data on reproductive health issues, click on Guttmacher's [State Center](#).

Lin V and Dailard C, [Crisis pregnancy centers seek to increase political clout, secure government subsidy](#), *The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy*, 2002, 5(2):4-6.