



Kamala Harris tried to force my pro-life group to promote abortion

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Two years ago, the Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling in favor of the free-speech rights of pro-life pregnancy centers in *NIFLA v. Becerra*. Yet many watching Wednesday's vice presidential debate may not realize that *NIFLA v. Becerra* was originally *NIFLA v. Kamala Harris*.

Harris is a hard-liner on abortion rights. That's par for the course for today's Democratic Party, of course, but she takes things a step further by seeking to silence pro-lifers in America's democratic public square, putting her squarely on the wrong side of the high court's First Amendment jurisprudence.

As California's attorney general, she championed Assembly Bill 775, the Reproductive FACT Act, which would have forced life-affirming pregnancy centers to provide information about obtaining abortions, over against their conscience rights.

In a 2015 statement, Harris described herself a "co-sponsor" of the legislation. This is unusual for a state law-enforcement official, since, typically, only legislators sponsor bills. In the event, Harris lobbied for and supported the legislation, and she later praised then-Gov. Jerry Brown for signing it into law.

More than 150 pregnancy centers in California were targeted by this unconstitutional legislation. Like the nearly 3,000 pregnancy centers nationwide, these nonprofits exist to provide critical resources to abortion-vulnerable women and support their choice of life. Services offered by licensed medical clinics include ultrasound confirmation of pregnancy, STI testing and treatment and other medical services. These centers also supply baby clothing, diapers, wipes, prenatal vitamins, housing, referrals for medical and legal help, adoptions and other critical services — all at no cost to the mother.

During the litigation in *NIFLA v. Becerra*, many mothers helped by pro-life pregnancy centers testified about their positive experience and expressed their lasting gratitude. During the COVID-19 pandemic, women have turned to pregnancy centers for life-saving support in record numbers. In turn, these dedicated nonprofits pivoted to continue providing essential services in their communities.

The data is clear: Ongoing support and friendship, material assistance, referrals for medical and legal help and other services are welcome aid for mothers during a time of uncertainty.

California's AB 775 sought to mandate that these faith-based charities post large signs informing clients about how to obtain state-funded abortions. By forcing them to become advertising billboards for abortion, on pain of fines for non-compliance, the state of California effectively partnered with the abortion industry to snuff out competition.

It would have been akin to the government forcing Hindu temples to promote hamburgers, Alcoholics Anonymous to advertise Johnny Walker and the American Cancer Society to boost Camels. This was the outcome Harris wanted. The pro-abortion-rights group NARAL later honored Harris for her work by giving her its "Champion of Choice" award.

She and her allies ultimately failed, however. The law was struck down by the Supremes in what the Cato Institute called one of the most significant First Amendment rulings in a generation. The court held that the government couldn't compel charitable, faith-based nonprofits to speak a message with which they fundamentally disagree.

A Biden-Harris administration would dramatically change the future of America and First Amendment rights. We know from *NIFLA v. Becerra* — originally *NIFLA v. Harris* — that the would-be vice president wants to extinguish the voice of pro-life Americans.

What's standing between her and her aims is a conservative-majority on the Supreme Court preserved by the Trump administration. As Vice President Mike Pence said of *NIFLA v. Becerra*, "protecting the sanctity of life is a priority for this administration, and we commend SCOTUS' decision on this case."

The contrast between these vice presidential candidates is stark, indeed.