



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

January 23, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to applaud your recent actions protecting unborn children, including your reversal of some Obama administration policies that were harmful to the unborn and those who serve them. These and other life-affirming steps are restoring a culture of life in our federal government. To further these efforts, I also request your commitment to reverse particular punitive actions the Obama administration took against Texas for pursuing a culture that prioritizes not only the life of the unborn, but of the women carrying them.

As you know well, many of the Obama administration's policies ran directly counter to these values by liberalizing the use of taxpayer funds to support abortion providers or their affiliates. But even worse, in some cases, the Obama administration took punitive action against states like Texas that pursued pro-life policies that did not fall in line with the administration's agenda. Most notably in Texas, the Obama administration stripped hundreds of millions of dollars from Texas' women's health program, simply because Texas refused to fund abortion providers or their affiliates through the program.

Texas' women's health program provides family planning and preventive services to low-income women. Twenty-five states currently receive federal support to operate similar women's health programs under 1115 demonstration waivers or through their Medicaid state plans. Regrettably, Texas' previous waiver was not renewed and the only reason cited was its "affiliate rule."

Fortunately, the retaliatory actions taken by the Obama administration can be easily reversed. Shortly after your inauguration, I directed my commissioner for Health and Human Services to submit a new application to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for an 1115 Waiver that would reestablish federal partnership for Texas' women's health program. Granting the waiver would reinstate millions of dollars that would go directly to funding women's health in Texas. With these federal funds, Texas women will have access to critical screening and

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treatment for hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol, which are leading contributors to maternal deaths in our state.

As of today, however, Texas is still awaiting approval of its waiver by CMS. Importantly, the approval of Texas' waiver is not only consistent with the policies you announced last week, but also will set a powerful example of the impact of your decision to rescind previous guidance from the Obama administration.

We appreciate the significant steps you have outlined to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent in accordance with a culture that prioritizes life. Reinstating federal funding for Texas' women's health program provides an additional opportunity to put those values into action, all while supporting health care access for Texas women.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

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