



## Mississippi AG: Pro-Life Means Supporting Both Moms and Babies

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The Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision changed the American legal landscape, giving the people fresh opportunities to decide how to fashion laws that both empower women and promote life. This year's March for Life, with its theme of "with every woman, for every child," demonstrated in the clearest possible way that the path forward that the people are choosing is paved with hope and respect, love and support for all women and for all children.

Across the nation, a network of 2,750 pregnancy centers are providing a wide array of services to women, children, and their families. In 2022, according to a new report from the Charlotte Lozier Institute, these centers provided an estimated \$358 million worth of care and support. Perhaps most importantly, they offered a helping hand, an open heart, and a strong dose of hope each of the more than 16 million times one of their clients walked through their doors.

These centers are a critical touchpoint for pregnant women and new mothers and an important part of the safety net that helps them and their children flourish, but they are far from the only resources available to families in need of support. There are countless charitable organizations, faith-based ministries, and public programs that provide access to health care, child care, job training, financial assistance, safe shelter, food and clothing, and more. But when a woman is facing a pregnancy, planned or otherwise, finding the time, energy, and even courage to pull it all together is daunting.

This is why, working with the Mississippi legislature, my office established Mississippi Access to Maternal Assistance (MAMA) in 2023 to help connect women and families with these resources easily and quickly. Since we launched the website, [www.MAMA.MS.GOV](http://www.MAMA.MS.GOV), on October 1, 2023, more than 7,200 individuals have visited it. It is designed to allow users to access, in three clicks or less, resources in nine categories: pregnancy, health, adoption, food, goods, safety, money, child care, and jobs. Just two weeks ago, we put MAMA at women's fingertips as a free mobile app, available in both the Apple Store and Google Play Store.

The response to MAMA has been outstanding, not only from those who turn to the site for help and support, but also from organizations that want to find out how they can be a part of the effort to care for our neighbors in need. In only three short months, we added more than 100 new service providers to our directory, and we continue to hear from organizations with services and resources to offer. We are also hearing from those looking to add the program as a tool they can use in their shelters, community health centers, and church ministries. MAMA is making the safety net stronger across the board.

MAMA is just one initiative in what I call the Empowerment Project, an agenda focused on five pillars: improving access to quality, affordable child care; promoting workplace flexibility; enhancing child support enforcement; fixing broken foster care and adoption systems; and opening new doors that help women upskill, educate, and grow. The Empowerment Project is all about helping women thrive. When women thrive, their families thrive and become stronger. When families are stronger, so are our communities. By empowering women with opportunities to move upward and forward, we are building the foundation for a prosperous, healthy society. It is a clear win-win.

As thousands of Americans return home after marching through the streets of Washington, D.C., for the second March for Life of this new *Dobbs* era, I hope they walk away with MAMA on their hearts and the Empowerment Project on their minds. While Mississippi is stepping forward to show what it means to walk with every woman and for every child, these are ideas that can work in every state, whether red, blue, or purple. It is for all of us to be the hope, the light, and the love that a woman needs when she needs to know above all else that she is not alone.