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## S. 874 LWVSC Testimony, presented orally before a Subcommittee of Senate Medical Affairs

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) appreciates the opportunity to address this subcommittee.

Authority and responsibility belong together. The State of South Carolina has demanded authority over the bodies of pregnant people. It is therefore only reasonable that the State also take responsibility for the consequences of prohibiting the termination of most pregnancies.

We have heard a recitation by an SC Right to Life spokesperson of the names of many assistance programs that are said to mitigate the damages of continuing pregnancies against the will of the pregnant person. However, 22% of South Carolina's families live in poverty and that rate is almost doubled to 42% in single parent households. Laura Woliver rightly describes the claim that there is an adequate safety net to counter this as "magical thinking." There are many gaps in these programs.

One of the most obvious is the Medicaid Expansion gap, which affects many of the working poor. This has amplified effects on pregnant persons. Mothers who are unhealthy before pregnancy and after pregnancy do not have healthy pregnancies and are not in good condition to care for children. Medicaid Expansion would help to address this problem. We also note the state's refusal to provide summer food programs for children in poverty. Our children experience the stress of food insecurity; they experience hunger.

There seems to be an underlying idea that the misery of poverty will motivate people to improve their lives. This is often untrue. People who experience the stress of dreadful circumstances are very often instead crushed by the demands of attempting to cope with the demands of daily life.

We support Senator McLeod's bill and very much appreciate her having filed it. We urge you to forward it with a favorable recommendation.

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