

# Tennessee Debates ‘Choose Life’ License Plate

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Tennessee’s legislature has postponed a vote on a proposed specialty license plate that would say “Choose Life” after some lawmakers learned proceeds would go to an agency linked to a pro-life group.

According to [The Tennessean](#) newspaper in Nashville, sale of the plate would benefit New Life Resources, which would set up a toll-free hotline for pregnant women to get referrals for counseling services as an alternative to abortion. The organization’s president, Brian Harris, is also executive director of Tennessee Right to Life. Both agencies share the same address.

Harris said New Life Resources began as an outreach program of Tennessee Right to Life but has a separate board of directors and financial papers.

Some lawmakers said the plate makes a political statement and needs to be abandoned. “I think it’s a political message, and we need to make a policy decision on whether to politicize license plates,” said Sen. Jim Kile, D-Memphis. Kile said he had voted for the plate a week earlier in committee but at the time was unaware of its links with Tennessee Right to Life.

A spokesman for Planned Parenthood said if the “Choose Life” plate wins approval, his group would consider pushing for a “Pro-Choice” plate, with proceeds going toward family planning and sex-education programs.

“Our preference is that neither of those would be approved,” said Jeff Teague, president and chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood of Middle and East Tennessee.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee also opposes the plate. “If the state decides to politicize specialty tags, then it may not pick and choose which

issues to support,” said state ACLU head Hedy Weinberg.

Supporters of the specialty plate disagreed that it makes a political statement. “It is not a pro-life bill,” said sponsor Rep. Glen Casada, R-College Grove.