

Safe Zone for

Life



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As the birthplace of country music and the home of Bristol International Speedway, the city of Bristol is known for many things. It's a border town where the Virginia and Tennessee state lines meet right in the center of State Street, and you can actually stand in two states at once. Towering above State Street is a sign that boldly bears the city motto, "A Good Place to Live."

Since the overturn of *Roe vs. Wade* through the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs vs. Jackson*, neighboring states Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia enacted laws banning most abortions. Now abortion centers are looking at Bristol, VA, to protect their profits.

Bristol is targeted to be an abortion tourist destination. For instance, an abortion center in Bristol, TN—owned by the same operator whose abortion center was at the heart of the *Dobbs* case—relocated to the Virginia side of the twin city so it can continue to operate.

That abortion center is "one too many," and "the [Bristol] City Council has full authority to stop other abortion clinics from coming here," said Bristol City Councilman Kevin Wingard. Josh Hetzler, legislative counsel for The Family Foundation of Virginia, confirmed that authority. "The Bristol city charter, state law, and the Virginia Supreme Court all support the right of localities to pass such ordinances," he shared during public comments.

Our ministry partners at The Family Foundation of Virginia have led the way for not just SBC of Virginia churches but for all churches, ministry leaders, and business leaders of all backgrounds to come together in this pro-life stance.

"We are ground zero," Wingard said. "I'm hoping this council sees how important this really is—life or death."

Those words, and the 200 people who showed up for a rally before the October Bristol City Council meeting hosted by The Family Foundation, helped embolden the entire five-member

council. The council voted unanimously to move toward approving a zoning ordinance that would prohibit further abortion centers within the city limits. Bristol, VA was thereby made a safe zone for life.

This vote means that the city council is directing the city planning commission to create a zoning plan that would exclude elective abortion facilities.

Bristol now joins other localities like Russell, Tazewell, and Washington Counties to pass or consider a resolution affirming their desire to protect all human life within their borders. Taking a stand for life is consistent with Bristol's motto—"A Good Place to Live."

At the rally, Family Foundation President Victoria Cobb emphasized, "Every abortion is a failure of a community to adequately support a woman who finds herself in an unplanned pregnancy. Bristol residents are simply telling the city council they are a community ready to handle the needs of their own neighbors in these situations. They would rather not be exploited by the abortion industry."

Let's stand together in prayer as Bristol awaits the city planning commission's next steps. Let's also support foster care, adoptive families, and Pathways Pregnancy Resource Center in Bristol so they know they are not alone in making Bristol a safe zone for life.



(left) Before a city council vote, 200 people rallied in support of prohibiting further abortion clinics within the Bristol city limits.

