PRESS RELEASE -- RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

A group of religious congregations, organizations and clergy—representing six different faiths—are filing an Amicus Brief in support of Planned Parenthood Association of Utah in its case challenging the Criminal Abortion Ban.

This amicus brief argues the Criminal Abortion Ban violates our rights of conscience protected by the Utah Constitution.

There is an unfortunate misperception that religions are monolithic and all oppose abortion. Nothing could be further from the truth. Before *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973, clergy from many faiths ran an extensive abortion referral network and openly facilitated access to abortion for tens of thousands.

As people of faith, we believe the choice to have a child and the choice to terminate a pregnancy are both intensely personal, moral decisions. For this reason, these decisions must be left to the pregnant person rather than the government. Our congregations are unequivocally opposed to legislation that abridges the rights of individuals to make such decisions. This is a matter of faith. Respecting the dignity of every human being means respecting the rights and freedoms of women to control their own bodies, destinies, and futures.

We are deeply concerned that the vast majority of women seeking abortion care are poor or low-income. They are making the moral decision not to bring a child into this world that they cannot care for. Similarly, nearly the majority of women who terminate a pregnancy already have children. These women are making a moral decision to put the responsibilities to their existing children ahead of some theoretical obligation to bring a fetus to life. As people of faith, we would support women in making these moral decisions for themselves.

At the same time, we deeply regret the social circumstances that keep these women impoverished. We call on our lawmakers to improve the economic circumstances of these least among us rather than force them to become mothers against their own moral discernment.

For all these reasons we urge the Utah Supreme Court to affirm the ruling of the district court and keep abortion safe and legal.