

**Testimony for Public Hearing  
Committee on Public Health  
March 20, 2018**

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**HB 5416 AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS**

Representative Steinberg, Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Jamie Beers and I live in Ashford, CT. I testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers.

For the past 20 years, I have been honored to work at the last independent abortion clinic in Connecticut. Since 1981, Hartford Gyn Center has been providing our community with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester abortion care in a warm, secure environment at 1 Main Street in our city. In addition to abortion care, we also provide well visits, birth control, pregnancy tests, STI screenings, and empower our patients to make the best healthcare decisions for themselves and their families by committing ourselves to providing accurate medical information. Our team of licensed physicians and practitioners take pride in giving compassionate, dignified healthcare to patients and their families. Each year we see approximately 3000 patients for various services and most of whom are Medicaid recipients. We are very proud to do this work, and we are committed to keeping that promise to our patients today and in the future.

The presence of a crisis pregnancy center in our complex has made the already sometimes difficult abortion experience even more challenging. Since the CPC opened their doors this spring, they have strategically changed their name from St. Gerard's Center for Life to Hartford Women's Center- one nearly identical to ours with the intention of deceiving patients heading into the clinic for abortion appointments. When patients are entering our courtyard, they see 2 buildings: Hartford Gyn Center on the right, and Hartford Women's Center on the left. Often, volunteers from the CPC will prop the door open and wait for unsuspecting people to walk up the sidewalk and lure them into the CPC leading them to believe their appointment is at the CPC. Once inside, they have the opportunity to shame them and present their lies and medical misinformation. Patients are confused and upset thinking they are in a legitimate facility when in fact they have been lured in by these extremists that intend only to get them to change their mind about having an abortion.

I have seen firsthand the deceptive practices of this CPC in Hartford, and it is concerning that there are 24 other CPCs in the state of Connecticut which are completely

unregulated. We can all agree that people should not be lied to and women should not be shamed when seeking health care. Pregnancy care is time sensitive and the delay tactics that CPCs employ are harmful to women's health. Connecticut residents should be confident that when they enter a facility, they know exactly what services are available to them. No one should be misled when they are looking for reproductive healthcare.

I urge the committee to move forward with H.B. 5416 to ensure that people in Connecticut are not blocked or delayed from accessing healthcare they are looking for.

Thank you.  
Jamie Beers