

**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,

I write in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers. As a volunteer to study the practices of pregnancy centers in Connecticut, my fiancé and I went to a pregnancy center in the New London area. On the homepage of the website it says "Considering Abortion? Care Net is your first step." The website also says they offer free pregnancy services such as ultrasounds, pre-termination evaluations, information about options, free pregnancy tests. It says everything is professional and confidential and you can schedule your appointment online. The waiting room area had usual pamphlets like any doctors office. My fiancé told the lady in there she thought she might be pregnant and asked for a pregnancy test.

When the receptionist called her in, they did not want me to come in the room and said it was against policy, but because my fiance insisted, they allowed me to come in. The back rooms were small. There was an exam room and a few other small rooms that looked like conference rooms. The counseling room we went into was small. The counselor was super friendly and welcoming at first. The conversation started out normal as she asked us what brought us in today, etc.

Throughout the beginning of the appointment I really felt welcomed and comfortable. However the more comfortable we got, the more personal and then aggressive the counselor got with us.

She asked my fiance what she was thinking of doing about the pregnancy and she said she wanted to terminate the pregnancy. The counselor stated that they didn't do those there but they had counseling to help her make the decision. She then told us a personal story about how she had been raped 20+ years ago and had gotten an abortion. She said getting the abortion was the worst decision of her life and she regretted it everyday and even had PTSD because of it.. She then told us how abortions can make it hard for women to conceive again, and that they offered services at their center to help mothers support the babies through the first year.

She also advised my fiance NOT to tell anyone she was pregnant until she made an additional appointment at the center to further discuss her options. She was very persistent about my fiance not telling anyone she was pregnant. The longer we were in there and the more my fiance vocalized her opinions on not being able to have a baby at her age, the more aggressive the counselor got about her not having an abortion.

The counselor wanted us to wait at the center as they were going to call the nurse in that day to give an ultrasound. We said she had to work and they replied with the nurse could be there in 30 minutes as she was not in on the day we went. They were very persistent about wanting us to see the nurse that day.

Overall the longer we were there the more uncomfortable I felt. I hope that when someone is looking for a real reproductive health clinic they do not end up at this place. No woman should have to go through all of this just

to get a pregnancy test and possibly make medical decisions like abortion. She should be able to get nonjudgmental options counseling from a licensed women's health clinic if that is what she is searching for. There should not be any confusion.

I testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 and I hope this testimony helps the committee to move forward with this bill.

Thank you.  
J. Bromley