

**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 Julia Brown and I live in Glastonbury. I testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers. As a woman who has used services offered by Hartford GYN, as a mother of three teenage daughters, and as a high school wellness teacher who understands the necessity of the many services that Hartford GYN offers, this bill is important to me personally.

For over a year, I have volunteered at Hartford GYN Saturday mornings. From 7:00-10:00 am, I help patients to find the clinic and to pass through the lines of protesters trying to dissuade women from entering the clinic. My task has become significantly more challenging since the CPC has opened. The CPC has placed a sign, printed in the same font and in the same colors as the Hartford GYN sign, on a directory outside of the building. They have a photo of a pregnant woman (with no text) in the window of their office. Also, a woman frequently stands in the doorway of the office, dressed in a white doctor's coat. The methods and tactics used by the CPC are designed to confuse and deceive women seeking healthcare at Hartford GYN.

H.B. 5416 seeks to require transparency and honesty in advertising – nothing more. If a woman is looking for Hartford GYN, she should not be intentionally misled by the practices of the CPC. This constitutes a threat to our public health system, especially to the rights of women to seek medical care. If women are looking to enter the CPC, that is their right. But to intentionally mislead women through dishonesty and deception cannot be tolerated. A few months ago, I was at the clinic when a woman and her teenage daughter passed through the gate to 1 North Main. About 20 minutes later they left, both visibly upset. They sat in their car, consulting their phones and apparently, trying to calm down. The mother called me over and asked where Hartford GYN was located. When I explained the situation, this woman told me that she and her daughter had approached the CPC. Seeing a woman in a lab coat standing in the doorway, they entered. The woman refused to clearly answer their questions. When they realized that there was no medical equipment, no medical personnel, and no answers to their questions, they ran out the door.

I implore you to vote for H.B. 5416, An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers, in order to protect the rights of women to seek legitimate medical treatment.