

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Committee on Public Health
March 20, 2018
Brianna D'Alessio
37 Gillette St., West Hartford, CT 06119**

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 Brianna D'Alessio, and I live in West Hartford, CT. I testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers. As someone who works directly with underserved youth in Connecticut, I am often approached by middle school girls who express concerns about sexual education and health, including the personal risks associated with teen pregnancy. Although students at this age are sexually active (as is evident by the several middle school aged students currently pregnant within the district), many of them have yet to receive basic health curriculum, let alone been provided with comprehensive sex education.

For many young women, particularly in marginalized communities, lack of access to pertinent educational resources can often leave them vulnerable to unintended pregnancy. If they do not know what to expect or how to seek proper medical attention, they are left feeling as though they do not have any choice but to carry the pregnancy to term, even if they do not feel prepared emotionally, physically or financially. This is where deceptive advertising plays a large role in negatively impacting young women seeking vital healthcare measures during pregnancy.

Because CPC's are designed to operate under the guise of legitimate reproductive healthcare clinics, they can often be mistaken by the average person for a place where one can receive real medical care. I myself have mistaken their publicity simply as ads offering low-cost, preventative healthcare procedures to pregnant women- something most young women I know have sought in their lifetime, regardless of economic or social status. Furthermore, pregnancy can be a time of overwhelming confusion for any woman, and has time-restrictive barriers when it comes to decision-making. No woman should be misled in making decisions regarding her own personal well-being that could potentially impact her for the rest of her life.

In conclusion, I strongly support H.B. 5416 to limit the deceptive advertising practices of crisis pregnancy centers in our state. I urge the committee to move forward with H.B. 5416.

Thank you for your time.

Brianna D'Alessio