

**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 Lancy Downs, and I live in New Haven. I testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers.

This bill is about transparency and honesty in advertising. When someone is seeking a clinic, they should be able to find one without confusion or deception. I'm sure many folks can relate to the stress of going to the doctor or the dentist, even for a regular appointment or check-up. It can be an uncomfortable experience — there's often a lot of new medical information to remember and you might be feeling vulnerable or overwhelmed. It is unfair that women attempting to seek reproductive healthcare should feel any added stress, especially from an organization that is not being honest about who they are and the services they provide.

The first time I visited a reproductive services clinic, I was a young college student, working at a summer camp in a town I didn't know very well. I was away from home — away from my mom and from my usual doctor — and I found myself suddenly in need of a birth control prescription. I made an appointment at a local clinic — I actually asked the an older friend to call the clinic because I was self-conscious and worried about saying the wrong thing on the phone. When I arrived for my appointment, I was feeling vulnerable and anxious and self-conscious. I know that might sound silly — it was a simple, routine appointment, after all — but I was inexperienced, I was young, I was away from my support network. I just wanted to speak with the the doctor, get my prescription, and leave. I feel lucky that I was able to do so without anyone unexpectedly approaching me and lying to me or preventing me from getting my prescription.

All women in Connecticut should be able to have the same experience I had. Anyone seeking a reproductive services clinic is likely worried about a million other things — they shouldn't have to contend with a CPC misleading or confusing them. I understand that any organization can provide services, but it should be clear to people what those services are. It is a threat to public health in our state when people are being deceived, delayed, or blocked in finding the reproductive healthcare they are seeking. Regardless of anyone's personal feelings about

abortion, I think we can all agree that no one should be misled or lied to when they are seeking medical care.

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.

Lancy Downs