

Public Health Committee

Public Testimony of the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
H.B. 5416: *An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services
Pregnancy Centers*

Submitted by Madeline Granato, Policy Manager
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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-five years, CWEALF is a leader of policy solutions that advance women's economic security and increase access to reproductive healthcare. We are an active member of the Coalition for Choice, a group of advocates that promote policies to improve women's access to reproductive healthcare and protect a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

CWEALF urges the Committee to support H.B. 5416: *An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers*.

House Bill No. 5416 takes necessary steps to promote transparency and honesty in the advertising practices of crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs). Crisis pregnancy centers are anti-abortion counseling centers that often use deceptive advertising practices to lure patients with unplanned pregnancies. These centers often distribute false medical information and biased counseling under the guise of a certified healthcare provider.¹

Anti-abortion CPCs provide false information and use shaming tactics against Connecticut residents. When someone seeks medical information, they should be able to find medical care without confusion or deception. Unlike reproductive healthcare clinics, CPCs are unregulated by the state. Deceptive advertisements by CPCs target patients seeking legitimate reproductive healthcare. Patients deserve complete and accurate information about all of their options to make informed decisions about their health.

Access to comprehensive, affordable and time-sensitive health care is critical to the economic security of women in Connecticut. Women in our state currently earn, on average, 79 cents to every dollar paid to men, a gap that is wider for women of color. Research indicates that access to reproductive services and information increases the prospect of economic security for women. The ability to control the timing and size of one's

¹ Crisis Pregnancy Centers Exposed. Retrieved from: <https://www.exposepcscct.org/>.

family also significantly impacts whether a woman is able to attend and complete college.² Research also demonstrates that women who are denied an abortion are more likely to experience economic hardship and insecurity in the years following.³

CWEALF urges the Committee to support H.B. 5416 to limit the deceptive advertising practices of crisis pregnancy centers in Connecticut. No one should be deceived or misled as they seek critical health care services. Connecticut residents deserve honesty and transparency in all of their health care decisions. health care providers.

² Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). 2015. Reproductive Health and Women's Educational Attainment: Women's Funds' Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Women. Retrieved from: <https://iwpr.org/publications/reproductive-health-and-womens-educational-attainment-womens-funds-strategies-to-improve-outcomes-for-women/>

³ American Journal of Public Health. 2018. Socioeconomic Outcomes of Women Who Receive and Women Who Are Denied Wanted Abortions in the United States. Retrieved from: <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2017.304247>