

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Committee on Public Health
March 20, 2018**

Jenevieve Ashman Johnson
34 Wethersfield Ave, Hartford

**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 Jenevieve Ashman Johnson, I live at 34 Wethersfield Ave, Hartford, CT 06114. As resident of the 4th District, I am here today to testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers.

Good afternoon, my name is Jenevieve Johnson, I am here today in support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertisement Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Center. As a proud resident of Hartford and a UCONN Graduate, Master of Social Work, Policy Practice expert I strongly urge you to vote yes in support of H.B. 5416. As a resident of Hartford, I observe many disparities and fully understand the need for women to have access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare services, adequate medical support and all resources and options available so that they can plan of their families. We must fully understand the dynamics of cities such as Hartford, the real needs and challenges women in our communities struggles with continuously, such as adequate employment, child care, lack of early childhood education for their children, which leads to poverty and homelessness? Public services funding for women and children has massively decreased over the last decades, inadequate living wages for families; meaning the war on poverty. The war on poverty has force many women in my community and other cities who identify with the same disparities to struggle daily in providing for their families. This is a women rights and healthcare service issue Hartford need the support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertisement Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Center. Because Women has the right to choose, we must support women rights and their healthcare as a private matter as all other healthcare services. This bill will provide adequate healthcare services from professional licensed clinics just as that of communities of our White counter partners without deception and shaming. The stories that I hear are very disturbing regarding the negative approaches of crisis pregnancy centers in many communities where women often are being deceived

and shamed especially, in facilities that mostly services women of color. When women have a private issue such as; pregnancy, it should stay private like all other healthcare issues. All women no matter their community should have access to proper services and information from a professional state licensed family planning clinic that provides accurate medical reproductive healthcare services. There are many women in their communities who does seek out religious counseling or other services however, when women are looking for services that they see as best fitting to their needs, no one should be allowed to shame or deceive them from adequate and proper healthcare services.

As a Social Worker, the main idea is to study and observe the people, their communities and their experiences. We aim to find common or combined factors with in the systems and policies that impact their daily living and future well-being. I have studied my community (Hartford), and the Anti-choice crisis pregnancy centers has negatively impacted our community being that they purposefully deceive women who are looking for legitimate reproductive health care clinics. Hartford, like all other major cities in Connecticut has a higher than average percentage of single mother headed households who are struggling with high levels of poverty. Having access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare and the ability to plan families has an impact on the financial outcomes of the women in Hartford; My city. Studies have shown that when women have access to adequate healthcare such as comprehensive reproductive healthcare they have better economic outcomes, which is one of the major reasoning behind the disparities of most Blacks and Latinx women living in low-income cities in Connecticut, Hartford, our state capital being one of those cities.

As social workers, our code of ethics requires that we advocate for the human rights of all people. When crisis pregnancy centers purposefully confuse women, I wonder about the Human Rights of the women in our community, in making their own choices regarding their reproductive rights and their families. Women have the constitutional right to make decisions about their own bodies and no one should be able to block them from that. It is a human rights violation to harass, deceive, and shame women looking for medical care, especially when they are already struggling with so many other social and financial issues. The International Conference on Population and Development and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women recognized women's rights to reproductive and sexual health as being key to women's health. Rights to reproductive and sexual health include the right to life, liberty and the security of the person; the right to health care and information; and the right to non-discrimination in the allocation of resources to health services and in their

availability and accessibility. Centrally, importance are the rights to autonomy and privacy in making sexual and reproductive health decisions, as well as the rights to informed consent and confidentiality in relation to health services. Thank you, Representative Steinberg, Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, and all supporters here tonight who understand the realities of women in our communities. As a woman, a social worker, and a Hartford resident, I fully support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertisement Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Center.