

Testimony for Public Hearing – Committee on Public Health

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HB 5416 AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS

Dear Representative Steinberg, Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Heather Joss and I live in Glastonbury. I testify in strong opposition of H.B. 5416 – An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers.

Honesty and transparency of all non-profit organizations within our state is very important; however, this bill uses language that is vague and subjective in determining what constitutes false advertising by Pregnancy Centers (CPCs).

Our society values the importance of women having options in regards to unplanned pregnancies. CPCs are a valuable resource for women that choose to continue their pregnancy. I am familiar with ABC Women's Center in Middletown, CT as both a financial supporter and a client. I have heard testimony of women that have received support from ABC during their pregnancy and afterwards. Personally, I was able to attend a free post-abortion healing group to help me work through the guilt I experienced after an abortion. I never witnessed any deceptive advertising or practices. All of the staff were professional and compassionate. It is clear that this is an agency that exists to support women and families.

This bill will only serve to create chaos and create unnecessary legal work while putting financial constraints on non-profit CPCs that simply exist to provide support to women in need during their pregnancy and beyond.

In regards to any advertising that causes a woman to inadvertently contact a CPC when she indeed meant to contact a reproductive health clinic, the CPC is clear that they do not offer birth control or abortion services. It is easy to locate a Planned Parenthood office or other medical agency that offers these services.

In conclusion, I strongly oppose H.B. 5416. My experience with CPCs in CT is extremely positive and this bill is clearly not favorable towards CPCs and the crucial support that they are providing to numerous women and families in our state.

Thank you for your time.

Heather L. Joss