

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

**Rev. Dr. Virginia McDaniel
10R Greenwood Road
North Granby, CT 06060**

RE: 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,

I write to voice my strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers, and to urgently request your support as well.

I grew up in the 60s and 70s, before the right to safe and legal abortion was guaranteed. I knew women who had to obtain an abortion illegally, and who suffered physical injury because they were not treated by a trained medical professional. I now volunteer at a women's reproductive health clinic because the climate of fear has become so intense for women needing access to a full range of reproductive care.

Each time I show up for my shift, I am greeted by an armed guard outside the clinic office. It shocks me to the core that this is a necessary precaution for those providing and receiving *legal* medical care. I feel the anxiety this guard must feel when the elevator door opens, and doesn't know who will step through the door and whether or not they will be threatening.

Each time I show up for my shift, I am confronted by protesters, who interfere with the clients who come for appointments, speaking loudly at them, trying to shove brochures in their hands, attempting to make them feel badly for getting the *legal* medical care they seek.

Volunteers like me are needed because there is a Crisis Pregnancy Center located directly adjacent to the clinic, with signs that convey an ambiguous and confusing message—and deliberately so.

As a person of faith (I am an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ) and a member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice for more than 25 years, I am deeply committed to protecting a woman's right to make choices about her own body. Roe v Wade underscored that Constitutional right. Women should be able to make their own healthcare decisions without stigma or shame.

I strongly support H.B. 5416 to limit the deceptive advertising practices of crisis pregnancy centers in our state. I urge you to support this bill. When someone is seeking the full range of reproductive health care, they should be able to access it without confusion or deception. There are few enough clinics which provide these services as it is.

No one should be deceived or misled when seeking healthcare. People in our state deserve honesty, and I urge the committee to move forward with H.B. 5416.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia A. McDaniel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

The Rev. Dr. Virginia McDaniel