

**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 Veena Muraleetharan 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.

As a college student, I am just learning to navigate the healthcare system and figure out what services are available to me. Even as someone as who studies healthcare systems in my classes, I am still confused about the numerous ways services can be covered and accessed in the United States. Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) pose a danger to woman like me because they exploit this confusion. Even though I myself have never been pregnant, I understand the rush of emotions that might accompany such an experience at my age. The confusion about the healthcare system and potential anxiety about a pregnancy could make anyone desperate to find reproductive health services of any kind. By making false claims in their advertising, CPCs exploit these emotions to deceive young, pregnant women and block them from seeking the reproductive health services they need.

This bill is need because it will help guarantee transparency and honesty in advertising. When anyone is seeking a clinic for any type of service, they should be able to find one without confusion or deception. Why should reproductive health services be an exception? I have learned in my classes that when people are deceived, delayed, or blocked in finding the reproductive healthcare they are seeking it creates a major public health threat. With the advertising practices of CPCs unregulated, I am concerned for women and families in my community. While I understand that any organization can provide services, it should be clear to potential patients what those services are. CPCs currently do not make it clear what services they provide, and in fact, actively work to deceive women. 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. Everyone has the right to make an informed decision about the health care they wish to receive.

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.
Veena Muraleetharan