

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

**Judith Pickering
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Hartford, CT 06106**

**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 Judith Pickering and I live in the Frog Hollow neighborhood of Hartford. I testify in strong support of H.B. 5416 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers.

Access to trustworthy healthcare is essential to the people of Connecticut. The practices of Connecticut's Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) simply does not promote public health. Carrying out a pregnancy is an extremely personal decision and no one should have the process complicated by misleading information. The practices of Connecticut's Crisis Pregnancy Centers has been shown to be deceitful and I feel strongly that this deceit is improper and should not be permitted.

As a young woman, it is my demographic that is most at risk of being taken advantage of by these CPCs and that is why I feel that my testimony is important. Information should not be hidden from those who seek it-- this bill is about transparency and honesty in advertising, specifically as it regards to the sensitive subject of women's' health. I am concerned for women and families in my community. I understand that any organization can provide services, but it should be clear to people seeking them what those services are. It is a threat to public health in our state when people are being deceived, delayed, or blocked in finding the healthcare they are seeking.

CPCs intentionally locate in low income communities, in communities of color, and near colleges and universities. I have volunteered for Connecticut's sexual assault crisis hotline and I know that having the opportunity to openly and honestly discuss healthcare options with a doctor is something that is of great comfort to someone who has experienced a trauma. It would be cruel to deny women and families access to honest sources of healthcare and information.

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.
Judith Pickering