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March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Testimony on  
H.B. 5416 "An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers"  
Before the Public Health Committee  
March 20, 2018

My name is Mickeve Regis. I am testifying in opposition to H.B. 5416. I currently serve as the Client Service Manager for the ABC Women's Center in Middletown.

A Better Choice Women's Center has been in existence and serving the greater Hartford and Middlesex community for over 28 years. We serviced hundreds of clients in the year 2017 and the number simply continues to increase. The very essence of pregnancy resource centers was built on a strong foundation of life affirmation. We get to celebrate life and help support and walk with those who choose life for their babies. We believe in fully empowering people to make informed decisions about their pregnancies. Any woman or man who walks through our doors, undecided or not wanting their pregnancy, is fully informed on all three options: parenting, adoption or abortion.

We make it very clear that we do not perform or refer out for abortions. Still, educating a mother and/or couple on what abortion is and the different types plays a key role in equipping one to make informed educated decisions about choosing life or not for their unborn baby. For instance, a client came in for a pregnancy test at our center and stated that she was undecided about her pregnancy. We gave her a pregnancy test and she tested positive. She stated she did not know what to do and that her and the father of her child could not have another baby at this time. We tried to comfort her, listened to her concerns and reassured her that we were there to support her. We discussed her three options; 1) if she decided to parent she could enroll in our parenting program, if she chose adoption, we could connect her to partnering adoption agencies, and 3) educated her on the three different types of abortion. We explicitly stated that we did not perform abortions or refer out.

The client agreed to come back for a follow up session with us to further discuss her options, but unfortunately she chose not to come back. Now, was she delayed or disempowered to make a decision for herself? No! She chose what she understood to be the best decision for herself and her family. Take note, she chose to come to our center where she was told about all of her options and chose not to return. She was clear that we did not perform or refer out for abortions. This is just one example, but it gives a clear insight into the integrity we have at our center. We will not mislead or deceive a client as it takes away from the process of providing detailed information for her to make an informed decision.

If a woman decides to parent, then we offer a parenting program that couples parenting classes and material resources at each visit. Our decades of existence and growing number of community partnerships strongly highlights that PRCs are well grounded and supported because we offer trust and relationship building through transparency and follow through in the services we provide. We firmly stand and state that we are not a center that provides or refers out for abortion. There is no concrete evidence to show that we are harming or misleading anyone in their personal choice to receive information on all their options. I encourage you to come and visit our PRCs and see firsthand the work that we do on a daily basis. I vote against the Bill H.B. 5416 and encourage you to do the same.

Sincerely,

Mickeve Regis