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Re: HB 5416, " An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers" , before the Public Health Committee, March 20, 2018

To the Public Health Committee:

I am a primary care physician, writing in opposition to HB 5416. This bill is completely unnecessary and is nothing more than a thinly veiled attack on the already struggling independent crisis pregnancy centers. In my primary care practice, which is primarily women, there is extensive awareness of the availability of contraception and abortion provided by Planned Parenthood, and some of my patients have chosen to avail themselves of those services from Planned Parenthood. In contrast, women in need are completely unaware of the availability of pregnancy support services offered by pregnancy centers. There is absolutely no need for these pregnancy centers to have to tell women about the options offered by Planned Parenthood and similar abortion providers; women are already well informed about that. There is no deception whatsoever in the advertising (which is extremely limited to begin with) on the part of pregnancy centers. What I do find deceptive is the title of HB 5416, which is obviously designed to vilify the work being done on behalf of the underserved, much needed work that is provided by small, privately funded pregnancy centers. These centers pose no burden on taxpayers, do not coerce or force their services on anyone, and exist to fill a need that is unmet by any other service provider. If you, as representatives of the citizens of Connecticut, truly want to preserve our tradition of freedom of speech and freedom of choice, you will vote down HB 5416, a bill whose only intent is to limit women's choice.

Thank you, Lenore Snowden Opalak MD