

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing to express my **opposition** to H.B. 5416, “An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers” (I can barely write that with a straight face – will explain).

I am a former resident of Hartford. I earned my master’s degree at the University of Hartford and lived in the West End for eight years. For two of those years, I worked and/or volunteered for a pro-life pregnancy center. I know the people who are involved in this work very well.

I was present at a 2015 press conference given by NARAL “Pro-choice” Connecticut with Sen. Blumenthal and State Rep. Matt Lesser, in which they presented their dubious findings about local pregnancy centers. It soon became clear that there was no substance to their complaints, which included that pregnancy centers outnumber abortion facilities in the state and that pregnancy centers seek potential clients by advertising in Spanish (the nerve!). It seemed to me that they would be happiest if pregnancy centers would locate in the middle of the woods where no clients can find them. The overall effect of the event was to visibly annoy the press and to waste center employees’ time.

Running a pregnancy resource center is a labor of love, and the result is a valuable community asset. [Research](#) by the Charlotte Lozier Institute (disclosure: my work colleagues) has [found](#) that an overwhelming majority of Americans, male and female, have a positive opinion of pregnancy centers and their work, consider them desirable additions to their community, and report positive experiences with them.

At a time when Connecticut is facing a [projected deficit](#) of more than \$200 million, it amazes me that any legislator would consider picking a fight with centers that survive on private charitable donations and a small army of devoted volunteers in order to provide much-needed services to people in poverty and difficult situations, free of charge.

Furthermore, the state would be courting highly justified legal action by passing this bill. An ordinance targeting pregnancy centers in Maryland was struck down in its entirety several years ago and cost Montgomery County \$375,000.

In that case, *Centro Tepeyac v. Montgomery County*, the court found that the sources of complaints about pregnancy centers “were universally volunteers from a pro-choice organization sent to investigate [their] practices” and that “there is no evidence that those women failed to get the medical services and counseling they desired or that the time spent at the [centers] was to the detriment of their health.”

By remarkable coincidence, a California ordinance targeting pregnancy centers is being examined by the U.S. Supreme Court – opening arguments in *NIFLA v. Becerra* are literally being held on the same day as the public hearing for this bill. What’s the hurry? Why not see the outcome?

It is clear to me this is a nuisance bill that has no real purpose except to prejudice, harass, and disadvantage those who would compete with a lucrative industry. I strongly urge the Committee to do a priorities check and reject H.B. 5416.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stacy
Washington, D.C.