

**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 Shel Swanson, 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.

I am a nurse midwife who is an abortion care provider. I have had many patients who have come to me with confusion and frustration about receiving inaccurate information about pregnancy options. For example, patients who are having to make gut wrenching decisions for themselves and their families, who have been told incorrectly that they will never have children again, should they choose to terminate their pregnancy. It is imperative that patients are able to understand, without deception, where they are going for their care, and what kind of medical care they can expect. I believe this is a public health issue.

Reproductive healthcare decisions are time sensitive. When CPCs deliberately confuse, deceive, and delay people in finding comprehensive medical care, this can result in serious harm.

- A patient may miss the opportunity to use emergency contraception which is only effective if taken within a specific time frame after unprotected sex.
- A patient may miss the window to access an early medication abortion, or they may miss the window to access an abortion altogether.
- A patient may miss out on early prenatal care to monitor the pregnancy and identify any potentially serious health problems including treatment for miscarriage or an ectopic pregnancy.
- Unlike reproductive healthcare clinics, CPCs are unregulated by the state. When patients are following up on deceptive advertisements by CPCs, they are likely seeking a reproductive health clinic. When patients enter a clinic and disclose personal information and medical information, they expect confidentiality. At CPCs, patient-provider confidentiality is not required.
- Patients deserve complete and accurate information about all of their options so they can make informed decisions about their health.
- In Connecticut, a majority of CPCs operate in municipalities with existing reproductive healthcare providers. Sometimes CPCs are even located down the street or directly across from a clinic. It is important that clear

and honest advertising of services is the standard practice. People deserve honest and timely medical care when that's what they are seeking, not the runaround.

In conclusion, I strongly support H.B. 5416 to limit the deceptive advertising practices of crisis pregnancy centers in our state. No matter personal feelings, I think we can all agree that no one should be deceived or misled when seeking healthcare. People in our state deserve honesty, and I urge the committee to move forward with H.B. 5416.

Thank you for your time.

Shel Swanson