

**Testimony of Susan L Yolen, Vice President, Policy & Advocacy,
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England on
Raised Bill 5416, An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services
Pregnancy Centers
Public Health Committee Hearing of March 20, 2018**

Senators Gerratana and Somers and Representative Steinberg, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Raised Bill 5416, *An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers*. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is the largest provider of reproductive health care and family planning in Connecticut, offering services at seventeen health centers across Connecticut. Recently, our North Hartford center received distinguished certification as a NCQA approved patient-centered medical home, offering a full range of primary care services and referral.

It is our mission to ensure that individuals in Connecticut have the ability to make informed decisions about all aspects of their sexual and reproductive health, which includes the public policy necessary to support informed choices. Planned Parenthood has vast experience with patients facing pregnancy and the issues surrounding the decision-making process once a pregnancy has been confirmed.

We oppose all forms of reproductive coercion or oppression, including the subtle cultural biases that judge women's ability to bear or raise children based on their economic or marital status or their sexual orientation. Because of these beliefs, we provide non-directive options counseling to all of our patients, in order to insure that *every decision about a pregnancy is made free of any bias* on the part of the counselor, and wholly based upon the patient's own life, lived experience and capacity.

We support Bill 5416 because we know that limited-services pregnancy centers take a different point of view, and often, intentionally, mislead patients about their pregnancy options, specifically regarding legal termination of the pregnancy. Occasionally, we hear from patients who come to Planned Parenthood after having been misled about their gestational stage, or told to return for yet another pregnancy test, in order to postpone their decision to later in the pregnancy. We also know that fetal ultrasounds, while available at some of these centers, are often employed not as a medical tool but as a way to induce shame or guilt in a pregnant patient, by forcing the patient to view the ultrasound.

This bill simply restricts the ability of such centers to make false claims about their services: to knowingly make or advertise any statement concerning any pregnancy-related service or the provision of any pregnancy-related service that is false, misleading or deceptive. For organizations so deeply opposed to the option of abortion that they exist simply to offer a different path for pregnant people, why should this requirement be onerous or difficult?

Planned Parenthood supports RB 5416, and hope that the committee will as well. Thank you.

