

Please vote NO S.B. 835, the bill attacking the advertising of pregnancy centers.

The reasons given for the bill are based entirely on claims made by one side, those who oppose the mission of pregnancy centers.

Pregnancy centers do not deceive women, in their services or their advertising. They merely give women other options and try to help women who choose not to have an abortion. Those who say they are pro-choice should support centers that simply offer women another choice.

S.B. 835 does not even define what counts as "deceptive." It gives constitutionally impermissible power to the state to do so. It would, in essence, put pro-choice politicians in charge of determining what would or would not be acceptable speech by pro-lifers. This is viewpoint discrimination targeting non-profit, non-commercial entities and would likely be challenged in court on First Amendment grounds, given that the U.S. Supreme Court just struck down a similar law.

In fact, a lawsuit against the City of Hartford for a similar ordinance was settled on terms favorable to the plaintiff pregnancy center. That settlement hinged on non-enforcement of the ordinance, making it effectively a dead letter. If Connecticut actually enforces a similar law against pregnancy centers, you may well be putting the state in legal jeopardy.

In light of that settlement, it would be unwise to want to pass a law IN THE HOPE OF BEING SUED, as some legislative leaders claimed they wanted to do.

With all of Connecticut's financial difficulties, the state should not begin down a path of what may be costly litigation by passing a law that may violate the free speech of pregnancy centers.

Please do the right thing. Please vote NO on SB 835, the bill attacking pregnancy center advertising.

Sincerely,

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