

Members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Lydia Bennett and I am here in strong opposition of SB 835.

For the past three years when this bill is debated, I hear it said that “this is not about abortion, this is about truth in advertising.” I’ve heard it from NARAL, I’ve heard it from medical students, I’ve heard it from volunteers at abortion clinics.

They try to make it sound like they are coming from a neutral, objective standpoint when in reality these are groups that are actively seeking ways to oppose the work of Pregnancy Resource Centers *because* of the abortion issue.

I was looking at a website, ExposeFakeClinics.com, which NARAL used as a source in their 2018 Report (still on their website today), and which states that it partners with NARAL, amongst other groups.

ExposeFakeClinics.com literally has a step-by-step process on how to pretend to be a Pregnancy Resource Center client¹.

- **“Step 1: Pick Your Clinics...”**
- **“Step 2: Put your consumer hat on. Take a good hard look at the fake clinic’s website, putting yourself in the shoes of someone that’s looking for an actual abortion provider or reproductive health services....”** Incidentally, this makes the assumption that someone seeking information regarding a pregnancy is looking for an abortion. This is not only a narrow-minded thought, but also it’s not necessarily true. Many people looking for pregnancy-related information would like to keep their baby, or would like information about ALL options. The site goes on to tell you how to determine if a center is a “fake clinic”; I’ll read just two of several bullet points they have:
 - *“Does it seem like they’re selling themselves as a medical facility? Are there pictures of people dressed in lab coats? While some fake clinics do have anti-choice medical staff on their payroll, most are just pretending to be medical centers to get folks in the door.”* - This is FALSE. MOST centers that present themselves as a medical facility are in fact a medical facility.²
 - *“Do they advertise services like “limited ultrasound?”—this means any unlicensed person can conduct it and the state doesn’t recognize it—yikes!”* – This is FALSE. The centers that offer “limited ultrasounds”, that is, ultrasounds that confirm

¹ <https://www.exposefakeclinics.com/callandreview>

² <https://cga.ct.gov/2020/PHdata/Tmy/2020SB-00144-R000309-Maloney,%20Lisa-TMY.PDF>

that a woman has a viable pregnancy³, are staffed by licensed medical professionals⁴.

- **“Step 3: Want to go deeper? Give them a call.”** And it goes on to suggest lies that you can say over the phone... “I’m pregnant and I’m scared/want to get an abortion/need help.”, etc.
- **“Step 4: Write your review”**
- **“PRO TIP: Reviewing fake clinics is WAY more fun when you're doing it as a team! We highly encourage you to grab a bottle of wine and get your feminist book club together to organize a fun REVIEW-A-THON!”** (In what other field does anyone have a party to get together and look at websites of places they’ve never been for the purpose of writing negative reviews?)

For people that are so concerned with “truth in advertising”, I find it interesting that groups like ExposeFakeClinics.com and NARAL have no problem with promoting misleading information. So the question is, who is really concerned about truth?

If we step back a moment, and if we look at this objectively in light of what I have read, how are we not to believe that the same people that would get together with friends and a glass of wine to have a Review-a-thon would not come to the attorney general, armed with “evidence” of complaints from “clients,” and under that presumption drag a Pregnancy Resource Center to court, **proclaiming them guilty until proven innocent?**

In reality, CareNet reported that the TRUE satisfaction rate of clients from affiliated centers is higher than 97%⁵. That’s REAL clients, people that have *actually* talked on the phone, gone to the website, walked into the building and experienced *actual* services.

Let’s be honest. There are people and organizations who strongly oppose pregnancy resource centers, and this bill would easily allow legal accusations of deceptive advertising. No one can say it won’t happen. The very fact we are discussing this bill is proof that it will.

Once again, I urge you to reject this bill.

³ <https://abcwomenscenter.org/am-i-pregnant/ultrasounds/>

⁴ <https://abcwomenscenter.org/about/our-staff/>

⁵ https://www.care-net.org/hubfs/Downloads/The_Truth_About_Crisis_Pregnancy_Centers.pdf