

Dear Members of the Committee,

I write to you today in opposition of S.B. 835, the Anti-Pregnancy Center Bill.

This bill wrongfully attempts to impose improper and unjust mandates on Pregnancy Service Centers by forcing these establishments to post in a public manner a service they do not perform, namely abortion. This bill is detestable and unconstitutional for a few reasons.

The S.B. 835 attempts to define a Pregnancy Service Center as “a mostly medical in nature establishment.” This is a false presumption as many pregnancy centers do not provide medical care at all. In the context of Pregnancy Service Center, “services” pertains to numerous supports such as but not limited to: emotional support for the mother, corporal support such as providing the mother resources to care for the child-including diapers or formula-as well as basic food and housing necessities for the mother and child. These are just some of the many supports offered by Pregnancy Service Centers; to pass into law a definition of what these centers don’t provide is erroneous and misleading on behalf of the numerous services such centers offer pregnant women.

Furthermore, to claim “false advertisement” towards Pregnancy Service Centers that refrain from advertising a service which they do not provide is setting a dangerous precedent. Forcing businesses or a non-for-profit (which some of these Pregnancy centers are) to advertise what they don’t do, provide, or sell is unconstitutional. Would you force Stop & Shop to advertise that they don’t sell paint? Or a hardware store to advertise that they don’t sell food?

Directing this bill to Pregnancy Centers in particular seems motivated by an attempt to harass pro-life institutions rather than pro-choice institutions. If a person walking down the street saw a Planned Parenthood adjacent to “Jill’s Pregnancy Service Center” and didn’t know what either institution offered, one might be very confused to find how little services Planned Parenthood offers in preparing women to be parents. Instead, they are met with the easiest ways to prevent being a parent, whether that be methods to prevent pregnancy or by eliminating the unborn child all together. “Planned Parenthood” is a more misleading name than “Pregnancy Service Center,” as the name implicates assistance in helping parents rather than terminating parenthood. Therefore, to single out Pregnancy Service Centers for false advertisement and not Planned Parenthood is curiously questionable.

To pass S.B. 835, the Anti-Pregnancy Center Bill, is a violation of the first amendment as it is mandating Pregnancy Service Centers to state that they don’t provide abortions. Other institutions are not required to state services that they don’t provide, and by forcing Pregnancy Centers to do so, you are limiting the rights and freedom of a particular group of people. This in itself is discriminatory and unjust, and a threat to our democracy.

I urge you to not pass this bill.

Respectfully,

Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Collins