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Public Health Committee
Hartford, CT

February 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern;

I am writing to ask that you vote no to SB 835. I am currently working in a Pregnancy Support Center and have learned that this is not the first-time legislators have tried to shut down our agency.

I oppose this bill for very personal reasons. In 1973, at sixteen years old, a junior in high school, I found myself pregnant and very confused and scared feeling that I had no choice except abortion. The only place my friends were getting abortions was in New York City. I made plans to not tell my parents and go with a friend who had done this and get it over with. My boyfriend did not ask me to marry him and I was afraid to trap him in a marriage. I felt I had no choice and came within 24 hours of the appointment in NY. My mom found out and came to confront me. I did not want to tell her because I did not think she would be able to help me and be terribly upset.

Ironically, it was my mom that gave me the **choice!** Society gave me only one choice. This bill, SB 835, does not recognize that agencies like Care Net, are offering all the choices. We do not perform abortions, but we absolutely discuss that as an option if the client wants to have an abortion. We also discuss adoption with clients who want to give their child for adoption even though we are not an adoption agency. We also counsel on parenting even though we do not certify clients to become parents. We only educate and offer support not only emotionally, spiritually but also materially.

Please vote no on this bill that tries to shut down agencies like ours. The services we offer have supported many, many, women and girls that wanted to understand all their choices, so they have been able to make the choice that was right for them.

To finish my story, my mom helped my boyfriend and I to communicate. She is the one who spelled out all my choices including abortion, which she was not going to let me go without her, adoption, or parenting. She helped us to both see that we loved each other and would be willing to get married and have this baby. We have been married 47 years. My son is a happily married man with 3 children, my precious grandchildren. Even though it was not always easy, it was the best choice for me. Had there been a Care Net back then, 1973, I would not have felt so alone. Care Net has been there for women at the most important crossroad decisions that can completely change the course of their life.

Sincerely,
Susan Costa