

Valerie Garcia

Public Health Committee
Hartford, CT

February 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Valerie Garcia, and I am a client advocate at Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center in New London. I have been working and volunteering here for a total of about four years. I see too many inconsistencies behind bill [SB 835](#), and therefore I'm writing to you in opposition.

As an advocate, I meet with clients who are handed a "limitation of services" prior to any services being offered. In fact, recently due to COVID-19 and in efforts to limit direct physical contact, we have been texting this form to clients long before they even step foot into our office. I encourage you to read our brief "limitation of services" paragraph, (see attached). It starts off by stating that we are a faith-based organization, and then continues by clearly stating that we do not offer or refer for abortions.

Clients know where to go for an abortion. I've been told on many occasions that they find out about us by intentionally searching online for other options that are not abortion clinics, because they were not wanting to be pressured into an abortion, but rather want support in knowing what all of their options are.

We provide information on all pregnancy options. Sometimes clients walk away with thankfulness and gratitude for all the support and information that we have provided and choose to get an abortion. Sometimes they do not and choose to parent instead, as they come to a personal realization that all they wanted was support in choosing to carry and to parent their child. Other times, they choose to learn about adoption as they look for an option outside of those two.

As stated in our limitation of services, we are just here to be a resource of information to empower women to make whichever choice is right for them. I am concerned that limiting our center in doing so is an infringement on our freedom of speech rights. This bill is set to only target our centers. If we are such a big issue, if we truly stand in the way of women being able to get abortions, where are all the people? Where are all these women who are so passionate about standing against our deceptive practices because they *themselves* have been a victim of it? Is all this supposed deception being solely based on hearsay? What does that say about our ability as a people to create laws that are justifiable, honorable and that hold up our constitutional rights?

There are laws already in place against deceptive advertisement. Why create one that is specifically targeting pregnancy centers?

I would like to briefly turn your attention to a portion of misleading information that is clearly stated on the Planned Parenthood website. It reads, "But be careful when looking for a reliable health center, because there are fake clinics out there that claim to offer information about pregnancy options and abortion. They're called [Crisis Pregnancy Centers](#), and they're run by people who don't believe in giving you honest facts about abortion, pregnancy,

and birth control. My question to you: Is this not deception? We are licensed by the state of CT as a medical clinic. Planned Parenthood is then, in fact, accusing the state of CT of issuing licenses to fake clinics. Why would law makers pass a bill that supports such a claim?

I ask you to please vote "NO" on bill SB 835 and for legislators to turn their attention and stay focused on the things that are of actual concern in these critical times which we are living in.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Valerie Garcia

Limitations of Service

Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center is a faith-based non-profit organization. All of our services are free, including a urine pregnancy test, limited ultrasound (If the urine test is positive), and limited Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) testing. We also perform a situational assessment and offer information on all pregnancy options.

The medical services are performed by a licensed medical provider, under the direction of our medical director. If indicated, an ultrasound may be performed to determine viability (alive) of the pregnancy and to determine gestational age (how many weeks pregnant).

By signing below, you're giving your consent for a urine pregnancy test to be performed by our medical staff and for the results to be verbally provided to you by that individual immediately following the completion of the test.

Whether the pregnancy or STD test is positive or negative, you should consult with a licensed physician of your own choosing. If you do not have a physician, we will offer referrals because we do not offer prenatal care.

Some of our Advocates are volunteers, and are all trained in pregnancy options consultation, though not necessarily licensed or degreed personnel. The information obtained here is not intended as a substitute for professional counseling.

All information is kept confidential, except if child abuse or other mandated reporting laws apply or if we believe or hear that you are in danger of hurting yourself or others.

Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center does not perform or refer for abortions, or provide any information regarding your visit to assist in obtaining an abortion.

Care Net does not profit from your decision. We are here to be a resource of information to empower you to make the best decision.

Care Net and its representatives (paid and volunteer) do NOT consent to having any conversations recorded

Signature

Date