

Testimony In Opposition of Bill SB 835

Rebecca Garoffolo - CT Resident and Supporter of Hopeline Pregnancy Center

To the Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Rebecca Garoffolo, I'm from Ansonia, CT and am testifying today in strong opposition to Bill SB 835. As a supporter of Hopeline Pregnancy Center, I have had the privilege of hearing incredible testimonies of women who have experienced help and positive support through the services provided by Hopeline. I have also had the privilege of getting to know some members of staff and have been encouraged not only by their professionalism but also in seeing their hearts of compassion toward the people in their communities. Their passion not only drives them to help and empower women who come in needing support, but they themselves are people of integrity, thoroughly educated and highly qualified in the work they do. Now, I have reviewed Bill SB 835 and have several concerns about what has been proposed;

First, Section 2 is suggesting that there have been deceptive forms of advertisement, however, you've failed to mention what exactly is coming across as deceptive. There is no clarification here. If you cannot directly express what exactly you call deceptive, it causes me to wonder what validity there actually is for a bill like this. If no clarification can be made, I can only determine that this Bill is the only deceptive thing enacted.

Secondly, in all of my experience with Hopeline, they have always been extremely clear and upfront - both in written and verbal form - as to the services provided. Each client is fully informed and none can receive services provided by Hopeline without first signing a form in recognition of what they do and do not provide. And I myself, as a supporter, have thoroughly reviewed the Hopeline website for the purposes of knowing what I am supporting - and I have found no forms of deception, whether by statement or omission, whatsoever.

Finally, Section 3 states that the Attorney General alone may determine the course of action against Pregnancy Resource Centers, implying that the Attorney General alone is the distinguisher of right and wrong. I find this to be incredibly inappropriate for one person to have so much power in determining the outcome of this blatantly vague accusation based upon their own personal standards. This leaves an incredible amount of room for bias and personal agenda and should be unacceptable not only to the people of CT but in America as a whole.

If we are a country in support of women's rights, then we should recognize the right that women have to the free resources provided by Pregnancy Resource Center's everywhere. Hopeline Pregnancy Center provides support for women of every color and language - whether insured or uninsured - at absolutely no cost. This should be viewed as a vital resource to communities everywhere.

In light of these facts, I hope and greatly encourage you to vote NO to Bill SB 835 so that women in our communities can continue to be supported and empowered in this way.

Thank you.