

February 9, 2021

Re: SB 835

Dear legislators,

Thank you for allowing us to voice our opinion on a piece of legislation that is currently before our Connecticut State Legislature – namely, SB 835.

Crisis pregnancy centers have been a lifeline for many women in dire situations. When a woman comes forward with a crisis pregnancy, it is a time of great confusion and interior struggle – should she keep the baby? Can she afford to? Will she find the support (financial, educational, social, familial) to be a mother at this time? It is at this time of greatest need that crisis pregnancy centers seek to step in, to provide concrete aid in the form of a listening ear, diapers and baby products, training and classes on motherhood, and often financial support or assistance in finding housing or other tangible aid. This great work of supporting such women in a time of vulnerable need is a critical part of a just and loving society.

The work of crisis pregnancy centers is not in any way deceptive. I have never seen one lie about its services – rather, upon inquiry, they are quite clear that they do not provide or refer for abortions. This bill leaves it up to the court system and the Attorney General to subjectively evaluate whether or not a crisis pregnancy center is honest enough in its advertising – such subjectivity could be, and will be, misused as a thinly-veiled attempt to shutter these organizations which are doing immense good.

The motive behind this bill is not to enforce truth in advertising – if it were, then one would do well to investigate the well-publicized but misleading claims of Planned Parenthood! It is clear that the purpose of this bill is to provide legal cover for lawsuits designed to shut down any organization that may *compete* with abortion clinics. This would threaten the tremendous work of compassion that these crisis pregnancy centers carry out on a daily basis.

I urge you to vote NO on this bill. It is not about honesty or women's health (which is in no way negatively affected by these crisis pregnancy centers). This bill is entirely a ruse to make abortion the *only* option for women in crisis pregnancy centers.

Sincerely,

Fr. Joseph Gill

Parochial Vicar, Basilica of St. John the Evangelist, Stamford