

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Public Health Committee
February 10, 2021**

Raised S.B. No. 835

AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS.

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Rachel Huselid and I am from Fairfield, Connecticut. As a Medical Student living and studying in this state, I am testifying strongly in support of Raised SB 835 An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers. Even as a student, I know the power of putting on a white coat and how it can lead to a sense of responsibility and trust between community members and healthcare professionals. It doesn't even matter what the letters behind your name are, when you put that white coat on you are putting yourself into a position of power. The individuals who run anti-choice centers that utilize deceptive advertising are abusing this symbol for their own interest, at the expense of your constituents and vulnerable women of this state.

As a second year medical student I admittedly don't have a lot of experience delivering this type of healthcare to these patients, so I can't tell that story. Instead, I have to tell my own story. I used to work in a health clinic in Maryland that served one of the most vulnerable communities, undocumented Spanish-speaking families. My role there was as a patient advocate, to help meet some of the social needs of the families that the overwhelmed social workers didn't have time for. In doing this I was shocked at the absolute trust that my patients put in me, a student who didn't even yet have an undergraduate degree. Every day patients told me their stories in complete confidence, crying with me and celebrating with me when we were able to make small breakthroughs together. My clients, mostly young women, handed me their babies to hold, disclosing their personal information, including immigration and deportation notices – and said, “I don't understand this, can you help me?”. These moments illustrated an immense amount of trust between myself and someone who is in a desperate situation and needs help. Every day I left the hospital and would pass a billboard that said “Pregnant? We can help.” with the phone number for one of these deceptive anti-choice centers, that in reality do not provide the full range comprehensive reproductive health care services needed and sought by so many.

Trust matters. Truth matters. And ensuring that everyone in Connecticut has access to unbiased, medically accurate and prompt healthcare matters. This is why I, as a medical student and future physician in the state, have to support SB No. 835. I strongly urge you to renew your commitment to Connecticut's women and do the same. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rachel Huselid
MD Candidate, Class of 2023
Fairfield, Connecticut