



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Public Health Committee Testimony in opposition to

Senate Bill 835: AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS

Co-Chairs Abrams and Steinberg; Vice Chairs Anwar, Kushner, and Gilchrest; Ranking Members Somers, Hwang, and Petit; and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to **testify in opposition to Senate Bill 835: AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS.**

I had the honor to be invited to the Women's Center of Eastern Connecticut by a constituent who serves as Executive Director. For over 30 years, this wonderful group of people has assisted thousands of women who find themselves in an unplanned pregnancy. They reach out in kind and caring ways and guide these women during a very difficult time. Their in-house services include pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, and parenting classes that offer both maternal and fraternal support.

During my visit I had the pleasure of meeting two clients that both were referred by friends who had positive experiences as clients of the women's center. They expressed how satisfied they were with the support they received and are now two proud new mothers of beautiful babies. They also indicated to me they have referred friends to the women's center whom now claim a positive experience. I have yet to be contacted by any woman who has said that they have been misled or deceived by this center or any other pregnancy care center in Connecticut. In fact, since my visit I have met several former clients, many of whom are constituents, who indicated to me how well they were treated and have referred other women they know to this center.

I spoke with one of the community partners, Kathleen Krider, from Access Community Action Agency. They assist these women with WIC, food, housing, energy costs, employment, etc. Ms. Krider indicated the Women's Center has been nothing but a supportive and valuable community partner.

This bill interferes with and creates the high risk of losing the Women's Center of Eastern Connecticut and many other centers like this one that do not receive aid from the State. This bill threatens the religious freedom and personal bodily privacy of those who seek treatment at Pregnancy Centers. Therefore, I am asking the Public Health Committee not to vote **Senate Bill 835: AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS** out of committee.