

February 9, 2021

Testimony in Favor of **AN ACT CONCERNING DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING PRACTICES OF LIMITED SERVICES PREGNANCY CENTERS**

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Dear Legislators,

I am writing in support of this bill. From 1982 – 1988, I was the Director of Summit Women’s Center West at Bishop’s Corner in West Hartford. During that time, Birthright and other “Crisis Pregnancy Centers” were springing up and trying to coerce women who were pregnant and exploring their options, not to consider abortion.

Deceptive advertising and implied training/capabilities of their staff and volunteers led many women to mistakenly believe that they would get a balanced list of options as they received a free pregnancy test. Time and time again, we heard from women at Summit who had chosen abortion who had been told lies about the risks of abortion, had been forced to listen to stories or see pictures of aborted fetuses, etc.

In those days, lots of advertising was done through the “phone book”. Some of you who are younger may not realize that we each had a big book in our home and office and phone numbers and advertising for businesses were listed.

There was an Abortion Services listing and the Crisis Pregnancy businesses wanted to be listed under that title. Pro-choice organizations worked with the phone company (there was only one back then) to insist that there be an Abortion Alternatives listing that the anti-choice folks could list their services under. This was indeed a battle and we won because it is ethical and moral to advertise the services that you are providing and not to mislead clients/customers/patients.

I am saddened to think that this ancient story continues to be repeated in this day and age. The anti-choice folks continue to mislead in every more unctuous ways, creating offices near to those where all options are offered from continued pregnancy to abortion and even using names of their business that mislead and having staff who guide women to the wrong door.

It is clear that legislation is needed to ensure that women have no reason to be misled. If they are choosing a continued pregnancy and do not want to consider their legal option of an abortion, they can choose a Crisis Pregnancy Center or other abortion alternative. If they want to discuss all options, be seen by trained medical/counseling professionals and to consider or access an abortion they should know where to go for those services.

I urge you to vote for this bill and hope that it becomes law.

Thank you,

Laura Minor

