

February 8th, 2021

Dear members of the Public Health Committee,

I would like to provide a testimony of opposition to S.B. No. 835. I am a former volunteer RN at Hopeline Pregnancy Resource Center in Bridgeport, CT.

I strongly oppose this bill due to the inaccurate and blatantly false accusation that pregnancy centers provide deceptive advertising. Not to mention, that there is no clear definition in the bill of what “deceptive advertising” means.

At Hopeline PRC, there are staff and volunteers who not only “wear medical attire and uniforms” (as stated in your bill) but are also medically licensed by the state of CT to conduct care within their scope of practice. As RN’s for example, our licenses are clearly displayed in the office which you are more than welcome to tour if you would like to see Hopeline for yourselves. I strongly encourage you to contact any office location and ask for a tour; I am confident that the staff would be more than happy to inform you about the center.

As stated on the Hopeline PRC website, each center provides pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, decisions counseling (which educates the client about ALL of her options: abortion, parenting, or adoption), Healthy Relationships Education, and referral services for Prenatal Care, Parenting Support, Adoption, Mental Health Services, Housing, Immigration Help, Health Insurance, Food Services, Energy Assistance, Clothing, Domestic Violence, Career Coaching. From my experience as an RN at Hopeline, I can attest to the fact that every service advertised by them is completely factual and transparent. It is also consistently made clear to clients who come into the office and anyone who goes on the website that: “While we do not perform or refer for abortions, we can provide you with the facts and support you’ll need to make an informed decision.”¹ Again, I just do not see what exactly this bill is labeling as “deceptive”.

¹ <https://hopelineprc.org/options/abortion/>

Over and over again, I saw clients at Hopeline leave with a sense of relief and empowerment knowing that they had people who were willing to support them and help them in any way possible; no matter what choice they made with their pregnancy. I believe, and so do those at Hopeline, that women deserve to be given as much education as possible pertaining to pregnancy, abortion procedure types, gestational development, risks associated with abortion, and the many free resources available to them in the state of CT that can empower them inspite of any difficulty in their lives.

Again, I encourage you all to visit any one of the Hopeline PRC locations to see the amazing work they do for yourselves. I assure you, you will be enlightened by what you see and will realize that deception has no part in their mission.

Thank you for taking the time to read this opposition.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Riccio BSN, RN