
**Testimony on
S.B. 835
“An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices
of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers”
Before the Public Health Committee
February 10, 2021**

Dear Members of the CT Public Health Committee,

My name is Cathy Shemeth and I am a CT Licensed Registered Nurse for 30 years. I am in opposition to Bill 835 for the following reasons:

- 1. This bill has been presented to you 4 years in a row and you have rejected it because it is based on inaccurate and biased information.**
- 2. Our son, Luke Shemeth, is a Lawyer who has worked for the CT Assistant Attorney General, Jeremy Pearlman, when he was head of Consumer Protection. Jeremy Pearlman is an expert, instructor and regular speaker on the “Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (CUTPA) 42-110 which already prohibits unfair and deceptive advertising. Our son worked with this protective legislation and has voiced this bill should not have come before the public health committee but rather CT Consumer Protection.**
- 3. CT Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRCs) that are affiliated with CARENET already follow strict guidelines to ensure that their websites and advertising material state that they do not perform or refer for abortions.**
- 4. A study, published recently in the Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons of 987 women with a history of abortion revealed that 73.8% of those women said that they had not wanted an abortion but experienced outside forms of pressure to terminate their pregnancies.**
- 5. In another study, over 80% of women who had had an abortion said that at the time of their abortion, they thought it was their only choice and over 60% expressed that they had wished they had been educated on other options besides abortion as well as given financial, social, and emotional support if they made the choice to continue their pregnancy.**

6. PRCs empower and care for women and men and educate them on all the choices available to them regarding their unplanned pregnancy. PRCs also support the freedom of these individuals to make their own decision and the services are free of charge. It's important also to note that the care that is offered is extended most often for a few years after the baby is born in the way of parental support and education, free baby clothes and supplies, and an ongoing peer community support group. This has saved our state millions of dollars.
7. This bill, which violates the free speech of PRCs could also start CT down the path of very costly litigation.
8. In 2009, the city of Baltimore passed a similar bill to SB-835 regarding deceptive advertising and was sued by a Baltimore PRC. The city of Baltimore lost the case and in September of 2018 was ordered to pay \$1.1 million to the Pregnancy Center after a federal court ruled that the city law violated the Center's First Amendment rights.

Respectfully, I ask that you reject SB-835.