

February 2021

Testimony in opposition to S.B. No.835

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Amanda Silva and I have the privilege of serving as one of the Center Directors at Hopeline Pregnancy Resource Center. I am writing to urge you to vote "NO" on S.B. 835, "An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers". The bill accuses all CT Pregnancy Centers of false advertising. The bill does not clearly state what they determine as "false advertising" except that Pregnancy Centers do not provide abortions in their pregnancy support services.

I started working with Hopeline a few months ago and have seen the astonishing work Hopeline provides. We have created a place where a woman can come to receive free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds and material resources. When a woman calls any of our Centers, she is treated with dignity and respect no matter her age, race, income, nationality, religious affiliation, disability or other arbitrary circumstances. All of these services are offered free of charge. Hopeline is **essential** for women who find themselves pregnant and in need of support. If a woman calls looking for an abortion, we let her know the services we provide and clearly state that we do not perform abortions. When she enters any of our Centers, she is given all the opportunity to use any of our services regardless of her decision to parent, place for adoption, or terminate her pregnancy.

Recently, we had a patient come in for a pregnancy test and she was very nervous about the possibility of being pregnant. When she came in she was informed that we don't refer, recommend or perform abortions. She still chose to use our services. This patient let us know that she was not ready to have a baby and was interested in having an abortion. We let her know that we are here for her no matter what decision she made. At Hopeline we were able to provide her with love, care, and the abortion information she sought. After reaching out to her, she explained that she had an abortion. She shared several times that she was very thankful for our help. Her experience is just one of many that demonstrates how egregious this bill is. She had a positive experience by using our services and gathered all the information she needed while not necessarily choosing life. Her experience at Hopeline impacted her life in a positive way.

It is very obvious that Pregnancy Resource Centers like Hopeline are clear on what type of services they provide while stating that they do not provide abortions. One can just

simply look at our website or call us asking about abortion and we will clearly state this fact. Hopeline is essential for women who are looking for information or support they are lacking while getting the preliminary services necessary. Personally, I've only seen women thankful for our services even if we do not have the service they are looking for. You can look at our Google reviews to see. Regardless of their choice, we are here to support our community members.

Please consider doing your research and voting NO on SB 835.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Amanda Silva CNA

Stamford Center Director | Hopeline PRC