

To the members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Erich Strunk and I am writing in strong opposition to S.B. 835.

As a long time Cheshire resident, I have supported Hope Pregnancy Center in town. First and foremost, this bill is unnecessary for the public health committee to focus on first of all, considering we are in an international pandemic. I can imagine there must be much more important legislation to work on, instead of this bill that has not been passed the three previous times it was raised. Second of all, this bill would give the attorney general the ability to bring a lawsuit against the centers for "deceptive advertising" which is legally ambiguous. After a quick google search, I was able to clearly see that Hope Pregnancy Center clearly states on their website and social media that they do not perform nor refer for abortions, thus preventing any sort of deception for those who go to their center to seek resources and assistance. The women who seek their care would be able to see this clearly from their website, again demonstrating that this bill is a waste of time, energy and resources. This center provides much needed materials, resources and mental health support to clients who decide to carry their children to term. If this center closes, where are these young women going to get items like diapers, formula, clothes, and baby items? Is the state in a position to fill these needs?

Secondly, this bill is a direct attack on the religious liberties and free speech of pregnancy centers. To ask Hope Pregnancy Center to promote and refer towards a procedure which is an offense to all aspects of their religious beliefs. Clearly this bill is not only harmful to women, but also an attack on freedom of religion.

In a world of internet availability to everyone, is there really a lack of information available about local abortion providers? Do you really think these women read a billboard sign and make a cell phone call to blindly follow the instructions of the person on the other end of the call? Do you not think that a woman who has recently found out she is pregnant is not capable to make her own decision?

Hope Pregnancy Center does not judge anyone for their final decision, as I've had the pleasure to visit their center and learn about how they help women in my town, and in the central Connecticut area. They simply support to the best of their abilities those who decide to see their pregnancy to delivery. Please do not pass bill S.B. 835