

Committee on Public Health

Public Testimony of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
H.B. 7070: *An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers*
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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-five years, CWEALF has led the development of policy solutions that enhance women's economic security and increase access to reproductive healthcare. CWEALF is an active member of the Coalition for Choice, a group that promotes policies that improve women's access to reproductive healthcare and protects a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

CWEALF encourages the Committee to support H.B. 7070: *An Act Concerning Deceptive Advertising Practices of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers*.

Limited services pregnancy centers, or crisis pregnancy centers (CPC), pose an imminent threat to Connecticut's public health and a woman's right to reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy. CPCs are anti-abortion counseling centers that use deceptive advertising techniques to lure people away from state-licensed reproductive healthcare centers. CPCs currently outnumber state-licensed family planning clinics in Connecticut. CPCs often falsely present themselves as comprehensive reproductive healthcare clinics and do not provide or refer patients to abortion care, emergency contraception, or birth control. When a woman seeks medical care at an anti-abortion CPC, she is met with misinformation and shame rather than the comprehensive, truthful reproductive healthcare.

Access to comprehensive, legitimate, and time-sensitive health care is critical to the economic security of women in Connecticut. Women in our state currently earn 83 cents to every dollar paid to men,¹ a gap that is wider for women of color.² Research indicates that women who are denied access to abortion face economic hardship in the years following³. The ability to control the timing and size of one's family significantly impacts whether a woman is able to attend and complete college⁴ and achieve economic security.

CWEALF encourages the Committee to support H.B. 7070 to regulate the deceptive practices of CPCs and to ensure that Connecticut's women receive truthful information about their reproductive healthcare options to make informed decisions about their health.

¹ AAUW, *The Simple Truth About the Gender Wage Gap*,
https://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=The_Simple_Truth

² *Id.*

³ Women's Media Center. 2018. "Lack of abortion access creates economic hardships for women."
<https://www.womensmediacenter.com/news-features/lack-of-abortion-access-creates-economic-hardships-for-women>

⁴ Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). 2015. Reproductive Health and Women's Educational Attainment: Women's Funds' Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Women. Retrieved from: <https://iwpr.org/publications/reproductive-health-and-womens-educational-attainment-womens-funds-strategies-to-improve-outcomes-for-women/>