

The Truth about Pregnancy Help Centers

The truth about pregnancy help organizations is purposefully being manipulated by the abortion lobby and its allies for political advantage. The abortion industry capitalizes on friends in politics and media, international and local to continue their barrage against the truth about the good and compassionate work of pregnancy help ministries. The 2010 HBO film “12th & Delaware” provides a number of questions regarding the work of pregnancy help centers. We’ve utilized this list of claims, standard among most attacks, to provide responses.

Abortion Industry Claim: Crisis Pregnancy Centers Use Misleading Advertising

Truth: Pregnancy centers advertise directly to those facing an unplanned or unintended pregnancy with statements like, “Pregnant? Scared?” or “Think you’re pregnant? We can help?” This is only “misleading” to those who sell abortions and are concerned about losing market-share and profit margins. Pregnancy centers services are free of charge and encourage women to make a truly informed decision.

But the abortion industry is manufacturing this into a *hot* issue right now. A bill called “Stop Deceptive Advertising for Women’s Services Act” was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY). The Senate version was introduced by Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ). The bill clearly and specifically targets pro-life pregnancy help centers by restricting their ability to advertise. It would require the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to create rules that would govern how and when pro-life groups would be allowed to advertise services to abortion-vulnerable women.

Joe Young, Vice President for Ministry Support at Heartbeat International, met with Rep. Maloney in August 2010 and filed this commentary about the bill, his meeting with her staff, and the effect it would have on pro-life pregnancy help centers.

Dateline: July 26, 2010

If the name of the bill sounds familiar, that’s because it is. The current bill is the resurrection of a bill, with the same name, that Congresswoman Maloney unsuccessfully championed a few years ago. It is the same tactic of rehashing old material in hopes of finding a more sympathetic audience.

I was not surprised to learn of the introduction of this bill; I expected that the pressure being applied by abortion advocates on their allies in Congress would cause action on the national level. I even expected that the bill would be introduced this year. NARAL’s relentless attack on pregnancy help centers, using unsubstantiated and misleading “undercover reports,” and their efforts to rally their die hard supporters to contact elected officials in Washington were a calculated build up to their demand for Rep. Maloney to reintroduce her bill. NARAL did this about a week before the bill was introduced.

What I was surprised by was the press release announcing the introduction of the bill. It actually carried a quote by the congresswoman acknowledging the good work of “**some**” pregnancy centers. Could it be that, while attempting to rally co-sponsors of the bill, she met resistance from the Members of Congress who have taken the time to hear the stories of pregnancy center clients? Unfortunately, she followed up her acknowledgment of the positive community impact of pregnancy help centers with the unsubstantiated charge against “**those**” centers that intentionally deceive women into giving life to their children.

Nevertheless, I wanted to give the congresswoman the benefit of the doubt and went to Washington, DC to meet with her staff and discuss their reasoning for this bill. I was told that the bill was necessary to prevent groups from taking advantage of and misleading women facing a

very difficult situation (untimely pregnancy). When asked why the bill targets only pro-life groups and didn't include everyone marketing services to women in this "vulnerable state," they said that abortion providers had no motivation to mislead women. Really? Since when has money not been a motivating factor? They did agree to review the language if we could produce examples of abortion providers using misleading or coercive advertising. What? Isn't that the reason I went there; for real examples of the need for this legislation?

The fact remains that when I challenged them to provide me with examples or instances of pregnancy centers using false or misleading advertising they could not. They would only say that they had been "told" about them (no doubt they were told by NARAL). When I provided them with examples of current Option Line and pregnancy center ads, they could not find a single issue with them, but again referred to "**some**" centers and "**those**" ads.

This legislation is just another example of vague references to unspecific complaints against pregnancy centers. It is a real threat though. The bill has been assigned to the Committee on Energy and Commerce where the Committee Chairman is Rep. Henry Waxman. The same congressman behind the infamous Waxman Report that vilified pregnancy centers using the same flawed methodology that NARAL uses in their reports.

Make no mistake, this bill isn't about protecting women, but rather, it is payback for the abortion industry. Restricting the speech of pregnancy centers and allowing pro-abortion groups free reign to continue manipulative and coercive advertising will reduce the number of women who receive true options counseling. More babies will die, more women will be damaged, and more families will be broken.

See the reference below to "Our Commitment of Care and Competence" tenant: "All of our advertising and communication are truthful and honest and accurately describe the services we offer."

Abortion Industry Claim: Women are Purposely Given Misinformation at Some Crisis Pregnancy Centers.

Truth: Pregnancy centers provide accurate and medically sourced information. Information is drawn from established medical professionals, standard textbooks, reputable research, empirical evidence and anecdotal sources. Moreover, an ever increasing number of states are resorting to legislation to force the abortion industry to explain what's truly involved in an abortion.

"Our Commitment of Care" was formally adopted by major U.S. pregnancy help affiliation organizations in January 2001. Focusing primarily on positive client care, these standards dispelled the abortion activists' false accusations and formed the basis for strong client services approval ratings.

Robust growth of pregnancy help efforts in specific – and non-profit entities in general – has brought additional scrutiny of these organizations. In response, the National Leadership Alliance for the pregnancy help movement updated and reaffirmed this document in 2009 and renamed it "Our Commitment of Care and Competence." It is the ethical code of practice for life-affirming pregnancy help centers and pregnancy help medical clinics.

Our Commitment of Care and Competence

- Clients are served without regard to age, race, income, nationality, religious affiliation, disability or other arbitrary circumstances.
- Clients are treated with kindness, compassion and in a caring manner.
- Clients always receive honest and open answers.
- Client pregnancy tests are distributed and administered in accordance with all applicable laws.
- Client information is held in strict and absolute confidence. Releases and permissions are obtained appropriately. Client information is only disclosed as required by law and when necessary to protect the client or others against imminent harm.
- Clients receive accurate information about pregnancy, fetal development, lifestyle issues, and related concerns.
- We do not offer, recommend or refer for abortions or abortifacients, but are committed to offering accurate information about abortion procedures and risks.
- All of our advertising and communication are truthful and honest and accurately describe the services we offer.
- We provide a safe environment by screening all volunteers and staff interacting with clients.
- We are governed by a board of directors and operate in accordance with our articles of incorporation, by-laws, and stated purpose and mission.
- We comply with applicable legal and regulatory requirements regarding employment, fundraising, financial management, taxation, and public disclosure, including the filing of all applicable government reports in a timely manner.
- Medical services are provided in accordance with all applicable laws, and in accordance with pertinent medical standards, under the supervision and direction of a licensed physician.
- All of our staff, board members, and volunteers receive appropriate training to uphold these standards.

Final language as approved by the National Leadership Alliance of Pregnancy Care Services – 03/17/09

Abortion Industry Claim: Pregnancy Centers are Fake Medical Clinics.

Truth: More than 40% of all pregnancy centers provide medical services under the supervision of a licensed physician and with trained nurses and/or sonographers and, in fact, are true medical clinics. The remaining centers who do not offer direct medical services either partner with existing medical professionals or have ready referrals to compatible life-affirming help in their community.

The real irony in this claim by the abortion industry is that, even as their own medical services are limited to “reproductive rights” services, they have lobbied for and received special treatment by government officials at the federal and state level. The result is that many abortion doctors and abortion clinics are not under the same professional, regulatory scrutiny as the nearby surgical unit or gynecologist’s office.

The abortion industry intentionally blurs the mixture of the two types of pregnancy centers – those who do offer medical services and those that don’t - to suggest both are at fault. Pregnancy help medical clinics services are directed by reputable doctors and staffed by trained medical staff. Both types of pregnancy centers include holistic counseling – physical, emotional, practical and spiritual – along with medical information. “Our Commitment of Care and Competence” serves as a guideline for this type of counseling, usually provided by trained, peer counselors.

It’s important to note the source of the “claims” against pregnancy centers. Abortion is a billion dollar industry. Profits from abortion serve to fuel lobbying, political campaigning and direct attacks against the compassionate work of pregnancy centers. By contrast pregnancy centers, with direct medical services or not, operates as grassroots, community-based efforts with primarily private funding from local individuals. They offer their services at no cost and do not benefit from the woman’s decision.