



NARAL Pro-Choice Washington, Planned Parenthood and the ACLU Attacking Pregnancy Medical Clinics and Resource Centers

One-sided legislation aimed at silencing Pregnancy Resource Centers.

Legislation introduced this week in Olympia, HB 1366 (and a companion bill in the Senate, SB 5274) threatens the existence of life-affirming pregnancy centers in the state. It is a thinly veiled attempt to silence alternatives to abortion clinics.

Introduced as an accountability act to protect vulnerable pregnant women, the bill requires onerous disclaimers regarding ideology and services provided by pregnancy care centers - but excludes those who provide abortion services.

A broad coalition of organizations, including Planned Parenthood, Legal Voice, NARAL Pro-Choice Washington, NOW and the ACLU, are backing the bill. The coalition claims "these centers endanger women's health, infringe on patients' rights, and limit women's health care options." Although the bill was recently introduced, its supporters have been quietly working behind the scenes to lobby legislators to support and/or sponsor the bill.

What the Bill Does

If it becomes law, HB 1366 would require a series of arduous disclosures; in addition, it would provide for any person "aggrieved" by an experience at a Pregnancy Resource Center to bring a law-suit, and if they win to recover fines and attorney fees. Not surprisingly, there is no parallel cost imposed on anyone who brings such a lawsuit and loses. Nor does any part of the law impose burdens on abortionists - they are excluded from its coverage.

What's Wrong with the Bill

The bill is not only unfair, it's probably unconstitutional. Legal experts who've examined it believe that it violates the Equal Protection Clause because it singles out one group for unequal treatment based on their beliefs. They also believe that it violates the First Amendment because it forces "disclosures" that are burdensome and in some cases untrue.

This bill is not only unfair and unconstitutional - it is incomprehensible in light of the state's budget woes. Non-profit, faith-based pregnancy centers receive no tax dollars and yet provide at least \$16 million in free services to communities in Washington. It makes no sense to impose punitive regulations that might have the effect of shutting them down.



Hearing Scheduled Wednesday, February 2, 2011

Senate Bill 5274 will be heard by the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee at 8:00 AM in the Cherberg Building, Room 2 in Olympia. More information on the hearing, committee member contacts, and a copy of the bill can be found at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/House/Committees/HCW/Pages/Agendas.aspx>

TAKE ACTION!

1. **Attend** the hearing on Monday in Olympia to let your voice be heard. **Pray for Life Services' Board Chair, Jeff Smith, and others as they give legal arguments against this legislation.** Planned Parenthood and NARAL are asking their supporters to attend, so please arrive by **6:30 AM** to secure a seat.
2. **Contact** the Committee Members and other state representatives to ask them to oppose Senate Bill 5274. Their contact information can be found at: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>
3. **Pray** for protection of our First Amendment Rights and ability to continue to provide life-affirming alternatives to those in pregnancy distress through the defeat of this legislation.
4. **Stay tuned** with up-to-the-minute updates at www.protectwomenwa.com
5. **Listen in** to "The Georgene Rice Show" on Monday at 5:30 – to hear Tom Glessner, President of the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates who is heading up this legal battle for Pregnancy Clinics across Washington State.
6. **Forward this**...let's get the word out!