

OPPOSE Choose Life License Plates

SB 801: Funding Deceptive Crisis Pregnancy Centers

SB 801 authorizes the issuance of a license plate that bears the legend “Choose Life.” Funds generated from these plates would potentially be distributed to crisis pregnancy centers, many of which use deceptive and intimidating practices to prevent women from accessing the full range of reproductive-health options. Withholding information and purposely misinforming women about abortion or other reproductive health options is misleading, fraudulent, deceptive, and dangerous to the welfare of women.

What are crisis pregnancy centers?

The “crisis pregnancy centers” that will be the recipients of this funding are not licensed medical facilities and do not offer comprehensive, accurate information about the range of options available to women facing unintended pregnancies. They are often set up as non-profit organizations and are staffed primarily by volunteers who have no medical training.

Crisis pregnancy centers often intentionally pose as comprehensive health clinics.

- For example, some CPCs intentionally choose their name to mislead women into believing that they offer a wide range of services, including family planning and abortion services.¹
- CPCs also advertise through posters, signs, and billboards that contain messages like, “Free Pregnancy Test,” or “Pregnant? Scared? We Can Help! Call 1-800 #.”²
- Women report, however, that when they call these numbers the CPC representatives evade questions about whether they provide abortions, and urge the women to make an appointment to meet with a ‘counselor’ to talk in person.³
- CPCs’ deceptive tactics extend to their physical appearance as well. CPCs often design their facilities to look like actual health care facilities with a waiting room, a partitioned check-in desk, and an ultrasound machine.⁴
- They typically locate themselves near clinics that offer abortions in a deliberate attempt to increase their legitimacy and lure potential patients away from receiving abortion care by capitalizing on patients’ confusion.⁵

Crisis pregnancy centers often present medically inaccurate information as fact.

- In an effort to scare women away from considering abortion, some CPCs provide false propaganda about the “consequences” of abortion—including false claims that abortion causes breast cancer, sterility, and psychological damage.⁶
- CPC representatives have been documented telling women that some birth control methods, especially emergency contraception (also known as the morning-after pill) will cause an abortion. They also claim that condoms are ineffective both at preventing unintended pregnancy and at protecting against HIV.⁷

In conclusion, women are entitled to accurate, comprehensive and unbiased medical information with which they can make their own decisions. The government should support legitimate, comprehensive reproductive-health clinics, rather than centers whose goals are to prevent women from exercising their constitutionally protected right to choose.

¹ For example, the crisis pregnancy center in Falls Church, VA is called “A Woman’s Choice.” ² See, for example, CareNet’s website, available at <http://www.care-net.org>. ³ See Deb Berry, Choose Lies, Orlando Weekly, April 17, 2003. ⁴ Barbara Solow, Medicine or Ministry, Independent Online, June 18, 2003 (available at <http://indyweek.com/durham/2003-06-18/cover.html>). ⁵ See Kaiser Daily Reproductive Health Report, Crisis Pregnancy Centers Moving to Expand Services, Seeking Government Funding, February 19, 2002. ⁶ Center for Reproductive Rights, Crisis Pregnancy Centers Seek Public Funds and Legitimacy, 11 REPROD. FREEDOM NEWS, July/Aug. 2002, at 4. ⁷ Is Sex Safe? Grapevine Publications (2000), obtained from Rockville Pregnancy Center in April 2004 by one of NAF’s CPC Patient Partnership Participants; see also Life Choices Pregnancy Center (available at <http://www.lifechoices.org/sexualhealth.htm>); Crisis Pregnancy Centre Ministry’s Volunteer Training Manual, Canadian Edition, Christian Association of Pregnancy Support Services, 2002, p. 152.

