



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY INSTITUTE

Dedicated to Strengthening the Family

WHY WE OPPOSE THE PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER GAG RULE

HB377/SB174 “AN ACT TO PROTECT PATIENT PRIVACY AND PREVENT UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE ADVERTISING OF PREGNANCY-RELATED SERVICES”

This bill aims to censor the speech of pro-life pregnancy resource centers (PRCs), making it more difficult for them to do their vital work for women and babies. If passed, this bill would:

- Prohibit “deceptive” statements about pregnancy related services, without defining which statements are “deceptive.”
- Discriminate against pro-life viewpoints by applying *only* to PRCs, and not to abortion clinics, simply because PRCs do not provide abortions, make referrals for abortions, or provide emergency contraception.
- Allow the Attorney General to decide whether a deceptive statement has been made and impose a \$1,000 fine on PRCs for every “deceptive” statement they make.

PRCs are charitable pro-life organizations that seek to help pregnant and parenting women in difficult situations. The services that PRCs offer free of charge range from providing pregnancy tests and diagnostic ultrasounds, to pregnancy options counseling, parenting classes, and more. Nearly all PRCs provide donated baby supplies such as baby clothes, diapers, car seats, and other items. They rely on charitable donations and volunteers to help women in need. Centers offering medical services such as ultrasound and STD testing, employ trained and licensed medical professionals.

This Bill Should Be Opposed for the Following Reasons:

It violates the First Amendment free speech rights of PRCs

- This bill engages in blatant viewpoint discrimination. It targets the speech of pro-life PRCs while allowing free rein to abortion clinics.
- This bill is extremely vague and does not even define what “deceptive” means. Pro-abortion activists have claimed that it is deceptive for PRCs to make statements such as:

- “We offer medical referrals.” This could be deemed “deceptive by omission” because women might think “medical referrals” would include abortion referrals.
- “Abortion can cause mental health issues.” Many pro-abortion advocates deem this statement deceptive because they believe abortion has no mental health consequences.
- Advertising on Google using “abortion” as a keyword, so that the PRC would show up in a search that used the word “abortion.” Critics say this is deceptive because PRCs do not offer abortions, even though many do offer services like post-abortion counseling. Centers provide options counseling which includes information on all three options a pregnant woman has: adoption, parenting, and abortion. Therefore, using the keyword abortion is an accurate description of the services provided.
- By hanging the threat of thousand-dollar fines over the heads of PRCs for violating their vague provisions, this bill would chill the constitutionally-protected speech of PRCs and make it significantly harder for them to do their vital work.

It Benefits Big Abortion at the expense of vulnerable mothers.

- This bill is an underhanded attempt to crack down on Big Abortion’s main competitor: pro-life PRCs. Planned Parenthood and other abortion businesses have lobbied for this bill because PRCs impact their bottom line.
- By targeting PRCs, this bill would ensure that pregnant and parenting women in difficult circumstances have less access to the support and resources that they need.

Please contact your senator and representative to tell them you oppose this bill. No one should be censored for supporting life in Massachusetts.

Visit mafamilly.org/takeaction to learn how to oppose this bill.