



Amended Statement in Opposition to Raised Bill S.37

Which includes “Pregnancy Services Center Fraud”

This statement is in **OPPOSITION to S.37 which includes supposed: “Pregnancy Services Center Fraud.”**

First, when has anyone complained about Pregnancy Center Fraud? Every center in Vermont enjoys a very high degree of satisfaction from its clients-- usually around 98-99%. They may not post publicly on social media to protect their privacy, but they let us know how much they appreciate our free-of-charge services.

Second, why are only Pregnancy Centers being targeted? Abortion organizations are not included in this legislation.

Third, thousands of citizens of the state of Vermont—women, men and children—have been assisted by pregnancy services centers during their greatest time of need. Pregnancy service centers provide pregnancy support and have promoted healthy sexual choices in adolescents, provided parenting classes, offered needed medical services, organized support groups for post-abortive women and men and referrals to community support. Pregnancy services centers offer these services at no cost to their clients.

According to the Charlotte Lozier Institute’s most recent survey, they found that 61% of women were coerced or felt coerced to have an abortion. As a result, the abortion experience disrupted their daily life, work, and relationships. They had more frequent thoughts, dreams, or flashbacks of the abortion. In addition, their overall mental health declined.

We encourage women to take some time to research all their options in order to make the best decision for them, and we welcome them back no matter what they choose.

Many of our clients have an abortion only to return to our center with the next pregnancy. One woman came to us for five pregnancies with five different fathers because she knew that there would be no judgment against her—only love and support.

Another client gave us permission to follow up with her after her abortion. When we called her, she was planning her suicide. She said that she didn’t realize how devastated she would be afterwards. Immediately she came in and we were able to help her process her experience. We worked with her the next several weeks through her healing. Two months later, she wrote her testimony against abortion.

One pregnant client couple was referred to us from the Howard Center. The young man came to us angry and abusive in his relationships and fearful of what the future would hold if he continued this pattern. We worked with this couple on parenting education and our Cultivating Healthy Relationship curriculum. This was the first place the young man felt safe enough to share the hurts of his past. Through the weeks he began practicing what he had learned about good communication and boundaries. The next visit he shared that he was able to walk away from someone who was verbally abusive and getting aggressive towards him. In the past he would have gotten into a brawl that may have included the police.

Around that time a Howard Center case worker asked to meet with us. She wanted to know what programs we were using with this couple because she had seen an enormous positive change in both of them.

Here is what our clients say:

“I would absolutely encourage a friend to come here—very peaceful atmosphere, caring staff members, educational and informative. Thank you-thank you-thankyou!”

“They listen to what you say. I would definitely come back again.”

“It was private, and the staff was friendly and cordial. I was able to talk with someone who really listened.”

“I want to come back. I loved the lady—she made me feel so much better about my situation and I feel better. Thank you so much for your support!”

“Your office was amazing, I couldn’t have had a better visit.”

“I would encourage a friend because it’s a lot of scientific information and support in a comfortable environment. Thank you—amazing place!”

“Thanks! I wish every woman had this available to her.”

“The staff was very friendly and professional.”

“I have been here more than once and everybody is so respectful and kind to your needs.”

“My experience was better than expected—very supportive and non-judgmental.”

In 2021, Pregnancy centers in Vermont provided pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, material assistance, STI tests, coaching and educational classes. These free-of-charge services saved Vermont taxpayers \$368,325.

With all of the good work that we do free-of charge, what provisions does S. 37 make for pregnancy centers? As of this time, I don’t see a balanced bill.

Bill S.37 is a conglomeration of items ranging from abortion and abortion readiness implementation to transgender reassignment surgery, to healthcare insurance and legislation that will greatly impact Vermont taxpayers. As people flock to Vermont for these services, the Vermont taxpayers will have to foot the bill. Do you realize that with this legislation you are opening the door for increased human trafficking in our state?

Does this make any sense when Vermonters already struggle to pay for food and heating costs? Now we are going to be taxed to pay for other out-of-staters abortions and transgender surgeries.

Please stop this waste of money on this unnecessary Senate Bill S.37!

Sincerely,

Deb Couture

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