



PRESS RELEASE

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Limited Service Pregnancy Center Accountability Act (SB 5274 / HB 1366) Introduced Today in State Legislature

Bill Would Protect Women's Need for Accurate, Timely Health Care Information

Olympia, WA – Today a bill was introduced in the Washington State legislature to address problems associated with limited service pregnancy centers. The measure would require a center to provide women with accurate information about its services, to deliver pregnancy test results immediately, and to protect women's privacy.

Limited service pregnancy centers, also known as crisis pregnancy centers, offer pregnancy tests and sometimes ultrasound imaging or sexually transmitted infection testing, but no other medical care. Women, often low-income and without health insurance, go to these centers seeking medical care and unbiased pregnancy options counseling. Instead, they get false or misleading information about reproductive health care, their pregnancy test results are withheld, and they are denied needed referrals for reproductive health care. They also have no assurance that their medical privacy will be protected. There are at least 46 such centers operating in Washington in 21 counties and 33 of the state's legislative districts.

"A woman facing an unintended pregnancy needs to be able to count on some standards for any care she receives, no matter what reproductive choice she ultimately makes," said Representative Judy Clibborn, the Prime House Sponsor of the bill. "Delaying access to pregnancy test results and other personal health information only puts women's health in jeopardy."

"Due to our state's dire financial straits, more and more Washingtonians are finding themselves without insurance, desperate for affordable, quality healthcare," said Senator Kevin Ranker, the prime sponsor of

the bill. "This bill makes sure that all women, regardless of their economic situation, have equal access to information about the kind of pregnancy care they'll receive."

A broad coalition of organizations, including Planned Parenthood, Legal Voice, NARAL Pro-Choice Washington, NOW and the ACLU, are backing the bill. The coalition believes these centers endanger women's health, infringe on patients' rights, and limit women's health care options.

This legislation is urgently needed because limited service pregnancy centers put women's health at risk when they withhold test results and give inaccurate information about pregnancy, reproductive health, or options. Limited service pregnancy centers must make clear that their centers do not provide service or referral for abortion or comprehensive birth control, and must protect the privacy of women's medical information.

The Legislation would:

- Require the centers to protect the privacy of health care information collected from persons seeking services.
- Require limited service pregnancy centers to provide pregnancy test results immediately.
- Require a limited service pregnancy center to disclose that the center does not provide services or referrals for abortion or comprehensive birth control and that it does not provide medical care for pregnant women.

There are limited service pregnancy centers throughout the United States. A recent news article in the [New York Times](#) highlights some of the problems with these organizations. City councils in Baltimore, Maryland, and Austin, Texas, have passed similar laws. If Washington passes this bill, it will be the first state in the nation to hold limited service pregnancy centers accountable to their patients on a statewide basis.

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[Planned Parenthood Votes! Washington](#) (PPVW) is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization educating Washingtonians and policy-makers about reproductive health issues. PPVW lobbies and educates to advance Planned Parenthood's mission and also engages in limited electoral activities.

[Legal Voice](#) is a nonprofit women's rights legal organization that pursues justice for all women and girls in the Northwest through ground-breaking litigation, legislative advocacy, and educational tools to help individuals understand their rights.

[NARAL Pro-Choice Washington](#) is a grassroots pro-choice political advocacy organization. NARAL works to protect every woman's right to access the full range of reproductive health options, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

The [ACLU](#) of Washington is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization devoted to protecting the civil liberties of all people in Washington and extending rights to groups that historically have been denied equal treatment.