

Senate Judiciary Committee

Brendan Bunnell 271-4063

HB 1416, prohibits certain government regulations regarding pregnancy resource centers in connection with abortion and contraception service offerings.

Hearing Date: April 28, 2026

Time Opened: 2:09 p.m.

Time Closed: 4:24 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gannon, Altschiller and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent: Senators Abbas and Carson

Bill Analysis: This bill:

I. Prohibits the state, state agencies or subdivisions, or any municipality from adopting certain regulations regarding abortion and contraception service offerings.

II. Allows pregnancy resource centers or persons harmed by violations of this act to sue the state, state agencies or subdivisions, or municipality for damage or injunctive relief.

Sponsors:

Rep. Farrington
Rep. Osborne
Rep. Sellers
Rep. Bennett

Rep. Kofalt
Rep. M. Pearson
Rep. Thibault
Sen. Avard

Rep. Notter
Rep. Perez
Rep. Granger

Who supports the bill: 162 Individuals signed in support of the bill. For a complete list of those who signed in support please contact the Senate Judiciary Committee aide.

Who opposes the bill: 578 Individuals signed in opposition to the bill. For a complete list of those who signed in opposition please contact the Senate Judiciary Committee aide.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of the testimony presented:

Representative Samuel Farrington introduced the bill. He began by stating that if someone supports free speech, religious freedom, and free expression, then they should support the bill. He stated that the bill ensures that pregnancy resource centers can

never be compelled by the government to provide or promote abortions in New Hampshire.

- He emphasized that the bill does not regulate abortion and does not prevent women from accessing abortion facilities. He stated that what the bill does is protect a constitutional principle that government should never be weaponized to pursue a political agenda.
- He stated that across New Hampshire there are more than a dozen, closer to about twenty, pregnancy resource centers located throughout the state. He stated that these centers provide free resources to mothers and families facing difficult pregnancies, including diapers, clothing, food, rental support, parenting classes, counseling services, and sometimes ultrasounds. He emphasized that all of these services are provided free of charge and that these centers do not accept a single dollar of taxpayer funding.
- He stated that across the country there has been a coordinated effort by state governments to target pregnancy resource centers and put them out of business. He cited Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, stating that in there was a \$1 million taxpayer-funded campaign launched to target these centers, which he said included advertisements claiming that pregnancy resource centers provide misinformation and lie to women.
- He also cited laws in Colorado that restrict doctors prescribing progesterone to reverse the effects of mifepristone, and in Illinois where a deceptive practices statute allows the attorney general to sue pregnancy resource centers up to \$50,000 if they refuse to refer for abortion. He stated that those laws have been upheld in federal court. He further stated that similar efforts have occurred in Vermont and again referenced Massachusetts, stating this trend is happening across the country.
- He then addressed why this bill is being proposed in New Hampshire despite no current legislation targeting these centers. He stated that Maggie Goodlander has expressed a desire to put pregnancy resource centers out of business and that Cindy Warmington has expressed similar positions.
- He stated that the bill is not asking for special carve outs, special protections, or taxpayer funding, but simply allows pregnancy resource centers to continue operating and doing the work they currently do.
- Senator Gannon asked him to describe the medical and counseling staff at these facilities.
 - Representative Farrington responded that it depends on the pregnancy resource center. He stated that there are generally two categories: those that provide medical services and those that do not. He explained that medical pregnancy resource centers may provide ultrasounds and operate under the direction of a physician, often with registered nurses on staff.

- o He stated that he has toured approximately four or five centers, describing four as medical and one as focused more on parenting classes and counseling services. He added that nationwide there are about 2,800 pregnancy resource centers with approximately 68,000 employees, and that around 70% of those employees are volunteers who are motivated by their beliefs rather than financial gain.
- Senator Altschiller stated that the bill differentiates between “pregnancy resource center” and “medical pregnancy resource center,” but that only pregnancy resource center is defined in the bill. She asked what the definition of a medical pregnancy resource center would be as referenced in the bill.
 - o Representative Farrington responded by directing her to the definition of pregnancy resource centers in the bill and read that it is a private nonprofit facility that provides pregnancy counseling, material support, or medical care to pregnant women but does not perform abortions or refer to abortion providers.
- Senator Altschiller responded that the bill does not specifically define “medical pregnancy resource center,” only pregnancy resource center.
 - o Representative Farrington responded that every medical pregnancy resource center is a pregnancy resource center, but not every pregnancy resource center is a medical pregnancy resource center.
 - Senator Altschiller stated that this would suggest two definitions are needed.
 - o Representative Farrington stated that he did not think that was necessary.
- Senator Altschiller asked why the legislature would create protections for pregnancy resource centers when it had previously declined to pass a shield law protecting reproductive health care providers.
 - o Representative Farrington responded that the House did not deal with that bill and stated that shield laws in other states typically protect out-of-state doctors from prosecution, which he said is different from what this bill addresses.
- Senator Altschiller asked how pregnancy resource centers are not already protected under the First Amendment, noting that there has been no legislation proposed in New Hampshire to regulate them and that they already operate freely. She asked where the threat is coming from.
 - o Representative Farrington responded by referencing statements from Cindy Warmington and reiterated concerns about political leadership potentially targeting these centers.

- Senator Altschiller stated that in her experience over ten years in the legislature, there has been no effort to regulate these centers and no current proposals to do so. She stated that New Hampshire does not regulate them and that they already operate freely under the First Amendment. She asked again where the threat is, noting that referencing Massachusetts does not necessarily apply to New Hampshire.
 - Representative Farrington responded that the bill is proactive and based on historical precedent. He stated that states like Massachusetts, Colorado, Illinois, and Vermont have implemented similar policies, and that he does not want those policies to ever happen in New Hampshire.

Bob Dunn, director of public policy for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester speaking on behalf of Bishop Peter Libasci, testified in support of the bill. He noted that many others would be speaking to the details of the legislation, so he would keep his remarks brief and focus on two main points.

- He stated that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has called Catholics in the United States to what they describe as “radical solidarity” with mothers and children in need. He stated that the work carried out by pregnancy resource centers reflects that idea of radical solidarity. He said that these efforts of helping women and children in difficult circumstances are the type of work that society would normally applaud.
- He added that if the issue of abortion were removed from the discussion, this kind of work would likely receive universal support, because it involves helping people in need, particularly women and children facing challenging situations.
- He stated that society, as a body politic, needs to come to terms with how abortion relates to broader public policy. He argued that if society wants to value the dignity of young human beings in other contexts such as those at the border, those who are homeless, and those in need of healthcare then it must also value the dignity of what he described as the young human being in the womb. He stated that once society begins to treat certain people as disposable, it should not be surprised when that mindset extends more broadly.

Representative Timothy Horrigan testified in opposition to the bill. He stated that he agreed with the previous speaker on the idea of solidarity with those at the border and those who are homeless, but added that those groups are probably not being supported as much as they should be.

- He stated that pregnancy resource centers have existed in New Hampshire without regulation, and that he has at times thought they should be regulated, though he has struggled with that idea for various reasons. He noted that there

would likely be significant resistance to such regulation and added that he did not see himself as the best spokesperson on the issue, describing himself as an older man approaching 70 and someone who, even if he were a woman, would be past childbearing age. He suggested that someone else would be more appropriate to lead such an effort.

- He referenced laws in Vermont and Massachusetts that had been discussed earlier, noting that testimony had been given in the House about a person who experienced difficulties running a pregnancy resource center in Vermont. He pointed out that the individual lived in Keene, New Hampshire, and commuted across the Connecticut River. He emphasized that New Hampshire is not Vermont and not Massachusetts, and argued that those states' laws should not be the basis for decisions in New Hampshire.
- He further argued that even for those who support the underlying idea of the bill, the legislation contains no provisions addressing potential federal interference with pregnancy resource centers. He stated that some of these centers serve immigrant communities and suggested that there could be concerns about federal enforcement actions affecting those populations.
- He then stated that, in his view, bringing forward this bill could actually make it easier to regulate pregnancy resource centers in the future. He explained that if the bill were enacted and codified into statute, it would create a new section of law that legislators could later amend to add regulations. He stated that if lawmakers decided to impose what he described as "common sense regulations," this new statutory section could serve as the vehicle for doing so.
- He added that the bill itself acknowledges that these centers may provide medical care or counseling services, and he argued that such activities fall within the purview of state and municipal oversight. He suggested that if these organizations are providing medical or counseling services, or potentially receiving taxpayer funds despite claims to the contrary, then regulation might be appropriate in the future.
- He also noted that Cindy Warmington, who had been referenced earlier in testimony, was not present to testify and that he did not feel qualified to speak on her views or those of others.
- He concluded by stating that while these organizations may do good work, the bill intended to prevent future regulation does not make sense. He argued that it would be more sensible to leave the law as it currently stands and not create a new statutory section related to these centers.

Representative David Love testified in support of the bill and stated that he has a pregnancy resource center in his district. He stated that from what he has seen, these centers do nothing but good, and that they operate at no taxpayer cost, relying instead on donations.

- He stated that the government should “keep its nose out of it,” paraphrasing Ronald Reagan by saying one of the most dangerous statements is “I’m from the government and I’m here to help.” He argued that government involvement is unnecessary.
- He stated that regarding earlier questions, some pregnancy resource centers are medical centers, and from his understanding, licensed medical providers work in those facilities. He contrasted that with a center in Derry that is entirely volunteer-run and provides no medical services, instead offering clothing, food, furniture such as cribs, and support for families.
- He described situations involving young women, sometimes 17 or 18 years old, who are scared and may face difficult reactions from their families, and stated that these centers help those families move from fear and stigma toward hope and stability.
- He then addressed concerns about laws in other states, stating that “copycat legislation” often comes to New Hampshire from places like New York and Virginia. He argued that without this bill, similar restrictive legislation could eventually be introduced in New Hampshire.
- He stated that individuals come to these centers for specific reasons and should not be pushed in one direction or another. He compared the issue to private business autonomy, stating that the government should not require a business to promote another business’s services. He gave an analogy that the state should not tell McDonald's to direct customers to Burger King when ordering food. He stated that pregnancy resource centers are private entities and should not be required to offer or promote services they do not provide. He concluded that the government should leave them alone and not interfere.
- Senator Altschiller stated that she was struck by his testimony that the government should not be interfering, noting that New Hampshire currently does not regulate these centers and that they already operate freely. She asked why the legislature should begin “meddling” with a system that is already working.
 - Representative Love responded that the concern is “yet,” explaining that copycat legislation from other states is common and could come to New Hampshire in the future. He referenced comments made earlier that a candidate for governor had expressed interest in restricting these centers and stated that he wanted to stop that from happening. He reiterated that it is difficult to find volunteers to do this work and that the state should leave them alone.

- Senator Altschiller asked whether he would support an amendment that would similarly shield abortion providers and reproductive healthcare centers from future legislative interference, effectively applying the same principle across the board.
 - o Representative Love responded by sharing a personal story. He stated that his sister died at age 42 from uterine cancer and described taking her to Boston for treatment. He stated that she had struggled with alcohol and mental health issues, and that she had expressed regret about having had an abortion earlier in her life, which he said affected her deeply. He stated that in his view, organizations such as Planned Parenthood do not fully inform patients about all possible consequences, and he characterized that as a failure to provide complete healthcare.

Ian Huyett testified in support of the bill on behalf of Cornerstone. He began by stating that, in his view, this was one of the most moderate bills he had testified in favor of. He stated that a few years ago he would have considered the bill unnecessary because it restates basic constitutional law, but argued that it is now necessary because pregnancy resource centers may be vulnerable to the type of conduct the bill is designed to prevent.

- He stated that he believed there were two reasons for this vulnerability. First, he argued that there is a pattern of state agencies in New Hampshire acting in ways that are partisan and beyond or contrary to what state statutes allow. Second, he stated that federal courts in the region, particularly the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, have shown a pattern of treating controversial, non-progressive speech as harmful and therefore outside the protection of the First Amendment.
- He stated that because of this, pregnancy resource centers could face actions from state agencies without having reliable constitutional relief, and that the bill provides a statutory judicial remedy to address that risk.
- He added that while his organization supports the bill as written, they suggested a technical amendment. He directed the committee to page two, lines five and six, and recommended striking the words following “shall not” through the end of the word “measure.” He explained that the injuries the bill seeks to prohibit are already clearly enumerated in lines seven through thirteen, and that leaving the language could create unnecessary confusion in court regarding standing, particularly if an injury needed to be framed as the adoption of a policy rather than directly referencing the enumerated harms.
- Senator Altschiller stated that the bill would represent the state becoming involved in an area that currently enjoys broad freedom, and asked where the threat to these centers is coming from, questioning whether it is based on

developments in Massachusetts or Vermont, and why New Hampshire should be concerned given its history of not following those states' policies.

- o Ian Huyett stated that the concern is state agencies or municipalities could independently use neutral-sounding regulations to target pregnancy resource centers. He reiterated his view that state agencies have shown a pattern of acting beyond statutory authority and that, combined with federal court trends, this could leave pregnancy resource centers without constitutional protection absent a statutory remedy like the one proposed in the bill.
- o He stated that the bill does not create new or expansive protections for the practice of medicine and does not require a separate definition for medical pregnancy resource centers. He pointed to language on page two, lines 23 through 29, and stated that the bill does not provide special carveouts allowing medical pregnancy resource centers to operate outside normal regulatory frameworks. He emphasized that the bill would not prevent medical or licensing authorities from applying neutral regulations or licensing requirements. He stated that it would only prevent authorities from restricting services specifically because an entity is a pregnancy resource center. He clarified that standard medical regulations would still apply.
- Senator Altschiller noted that commissioners of state agencies are appointed by the executive branch, which had been held by Republicans for several years, and asked him to identify specific examples or patterns that demonstrate the partisan behavior he described and that would threaten pregnancy resource centers.
 - o Ian Huyett responded that his organization often endorses Republicans, but that he did not attribute the issue solely to Democratic legislators. He stated that the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services had been tasked under the 2022 patients' bill of rights to enforce provisions penalizing medical providers who denied care based on vaccination status, but that the department refused for about a year to enforce those provisions. He stated that this occurred even when providers were allegedly denying care such as organ transplants based on vaccination status.
 - o He also cited the 2021 law concerning critical race theory, stating that the New Hampshire Department of Education was tasked with enforcing provisions related to educator conduct. He stated that Cornerstone helped 67 parents report alleged violations, but that the department did not open investigations into any of those reports.
 - o He then referenced enforcement issues related to vehicle inspection laws, stating that the New Hampshire Department of Safety did not enforce

provisions regarding cosmetic rust inspections and indicated that additional legislation would be required to address the issue. He stated that these examples reflect a broader pattern of state agencies pursuing their own policy agendas and not being fully accountable to the legislative process, which in his view necessitates clearer statutory remedies.

Abbey Prud'homme, a middle school teacher at St. Christopher Academy and board member of Birthright Manchester, testified in support of the bill. She stated that Birthright had over 500 client visits in the previous year and that the organization helps women experiencing crisis pregnancies.

- She argued that if there is truly no threat to pregnancy resource centers, then there should be no issue with passing the bill, since it would have no negative effect. She stated that the bill serves as a precaution in case there is a threat in the future and described it as an added layer of protection, comparing it to a life vest on an airplane that is rarely needed but important to have.
- She stated that she supports the bill and believes it is necessary. She argued that it allows for more voices rather than fewer, stating that women can still choose to go to Planned Parenthood if they wish, but that pregnancy resource centers should be able to provide the care they are designed to offer.
- Senator Altschiller asked her what kind of care Birthright provides.
 - Abbey Prud'homme responded that the organization primarily provides material support such as diapers, clothing, blankets, and similar items. She stated that they also provide referrals, for example directing someone seeking an ultrasound to other organizations such as Real Options. She added that they help connect women to services in situations such as homelessness or abusive relationships, though they do not directly provide those services themselves.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether she would support an amendment to the bill that would also provide similar protections for abortion providers and reproductive healthcare centers.
 - Abbey Prud'homme responded that she did not feel fully qualified to speak on that, but stated that personally and morally she would not be opposed to both types of centers being protected, though she emphasized that pregnancy resource centers should be protected.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether the First Amendment rights of Birthright volunteers, board members, or staff had ever been infringed.

- o Abbey Prud'homme responded that they had not, but reiterated that the bill provides an added layer of protection to ensure that such issues do not arise in the future.
- Senator Altschiller then asked whether the state had ever required Birthright to post materials that conflicted with its mission.
 - o Abbey Prud'homme responded that she was not aware of any such requirement. She added that although New Hampshire is sometimes described as a red state, she views it as more of a purple state given its political composition, and reiterated that while no issues have occurred so far, the bill would ensure that there would not be problems in the future.

Liz Neville, the founder and president of the board for St. Gianna's Place, describing it as a nonprofit home for homeless pregnant mothers and their young children and babies. She explained that the passage of the bill matters to St. Gianna's Place because it would protect their ability to continue their mission of offering transitional living to mothers and children who would otherwise be homeless.

- She stated that they provide a safe and nurturing home for one to two years, during which they teach skills needed for independent living such as budgeting, cooking, nutrition, and parenting. She stated that they help residents obtain a GED if needed, assist with job training, college courses, driver's licenses, and even purchasing a car.
- She emphasized that the organization is faith-based and teaches mothers about their dignity, stating that this contributes significantly to their transformation.
- She described the women they serve as often coming from abusive situations, broken families, or substance abuse recovery, and stated that through the support provided, their lives become transformed and they gain confidence and self-worth. She concluded by stating that they need the legislation as protection so they can continue their work.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether there had been any state interference with how the organization provides services.
 - o Liz Neville responded that there had not been any interference "not yet." The senator then asked whether they provide medical services. Liz Neville responded that aside from counseling, which she was unsure whether it qualified as medical, they do not provide medical services but instead make referrals to medical facilities in the community.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether the organization is Catholic.

- o Liz Neville responded that it is in the Catholic tradition but is not formally under the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, and therefore does not call itself a Catholic home but rather a home in the Catholic tradition.
- Senator Altschiller then confirmed that the state is not interfering with their work and that no one is threatening to close their business or direct how they operate.
- o Liz Neville responded that this was correct, again adding “not yet.”

Phyllis Woods. a resident of Dover, testified in support of the bill and stated that she had previously served on the House Judiciary Committee and also volunteered at several pregnancy centers. She stated that she worked with Birthright for over 25 years in roles such as fundraising, bookkeeping, and board service, and also worked with a medical pregnancy center, Options for Women in Dover.

- She addressed concerns raised earlier that there is no current threat to pregnancy resource centers, stating that while they may not be in jeopardy now, centers across the country are experiencing what she described as assaults on their freedom of speech.
- She listed states including Delaware, California, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Illinois, and Washington as having enacted laws targeting pregnancy centers. She argued that given these developments, it would be prudent for New Hampshire to act proactively to protect free speech.
- She further stated that lawmakers and advocates are raising concerns about legislation in Louisiana that could undermine pregnancy centers, and that a center in California is under scrutiny from the attorney general. She also referenced developments in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maine. She stated that Kelly Ayotte had warned her during a campaign that similar efforts could spread across New England and threaten centers in New Hampshire.
- She cited statements by Maggie Goodlander criticizing pregnancy centers as misleading or predatory, and stated that she believed similar sentiments were shared by Cindy Warmington and Joyce Craig. She argued that it is unacceptable to deprive women of services that are provided free of cost in various pregnancy situations, including for those considering abortion. She stated that women are already aware that abortion is an option and that pregnancy centers provide counseling and support regardless of a woman’s situation.
- She emphasized that while services are free to clients, they are funded by private donations from tens or hundreds of thousands of supporters across the

state, not by government funding. She estimated that in 2024, approximately \$1.5 million worth of services were provided. She stated that these centers are supported by volunteers and donors and provide compassionate, nonjudgmental, confidential care.

- She then addressed concerns about medical services at pregnancy centers. She stated that most medical pregnancy centers in New Hampshire have either volunteer or paid medical staff. She described that centers offering ultrasounds must have licensed sonographers and operate under medical oversight. She explained that services may include medical-grade pregnancy tests and ultrasounds, including pre-abortion screening, and that centers will serve women regardless of whether they intend to continue or terminate a pregnancy, though they do not perform or refer for abortions.
- She described an example of a woman who had taken multiple over-the-counter pregnancy tests and was found not to be pregnant after a medical test at the center. She emphasized that these centers provide important clarification and support. She argued that it is unrealistic to assume that pregnancy centers are not at risk, stating that political changes could quickly place them in jeopardy. She urged the committee to pass the bill, noting that it would not cost the state money and would be supported by the public.
- Senator Altschiller confirmed that her center uses ultrasound machines and licensed sonographers and asked whether those professionals are licensed in New Hampshire.
 - Phyllis Woods responded that they are.
 - Senator Altschiller stated that licensed providers are governed by the patient bill of rights and must disclose treatment options, risks, and costs. She asked how the center provides a full scope of treatment alternatives if it does not refer for abortion services.
 - Phyllis Woods responded that board members do not interact directly with clients and that services are private and confidential. She explained that advocates or nurses meet with clients, take a full history, administer a medical-grade pregnancy test, and, if positive, offer follow-up services such as ultrasounds on a permission-based basis. She stated that clients are referred to physicians for further care as needed.
- Senator Altschiller noted that the center advertises a “full scope of options” but does not provide or refer for abortion services, questioning whether that is a contradiction and whether it conflicts with obligations under the patient bill of rights.
 - Phyllis Woods responded that she was unsure how to answer that but stated that centers clearly list the services they provide and that

individuals seeking other services would need to go to private physicians or gynecologists. She reiterated that pregnancy centers do not counsel for or refer for abortions and that this is part of the free speech and conscience protections they seek to maintain.

- Senator Altschiller asked whether sonographers diagnose conditions such as ectopic pregnancies.
 - Phyllis Woods initially stated that they do, then clarified that they do not formally diagnose but can identify issues and refer patients for follow-up care. She acknowledged that they may inform patients that a pregnancy is not viable based on what they observe.
- Senator Altschiller then asked about intake procedures and how client information is handled.
 - Phyllis Woods stated that intake information is collected and kept in private files, not shared publicly, and used to provide follow-up care. She explained that records are maintained so that clients can return for future services.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether that information is protected under HIPAA.
 - Phyllis Woods responded that technically it is not, but emphasized that the organization maintains confidentiality and does not disclose information. She clarified that while she personally does not know patient names as a board member, intake staff do collect identifying information.
- Senator Altschiller asked how the organization distinguishes between information handled by licensed providers, which would be subject to HIPAA, and other intake data that is not protected.
 - Phyllis Woods responded that they provide a patient bill of rights and that medical professionals involved would be bound by HIPAA, but that the organization itself does not disclose names and handles information carefully.

Janice Woods testified in support of the bill. She introduced herself as a resident of Dover, New Hampshire, a small business owner, and a volunteer and supporter of the bill. She stated that she was not in a position to answer the detailed policy questions being asked but wanted to share her firsthand experience with pregnancy resource organizations.

- She stated that she has seen the work of various organizations that provide different kinds of support, including holistic assistance such as mental health support, clothing, food, and material goods like strollers, car seats, and baby

items. She said she has personally contributed these types of items. She also noted that some organizations provide housing for homeless pregnant women and stated that she has seen how that support has made a significant difference.

- She expressed concern that support for these types of organizations could be easily changed or removed through regulatory or legislative action. She stated that although there is strong support for these organizations in New Hampshire, she believes that support is at risk and that the bill would help solidify and protect it.
- She stated that she does not believe there is a general need to protect organizations like Planned Parenthood, stating that those services are not likely to go away, even though she personally would prefer they did.
- Senator Gannon asked whether she shared her mother's concern about surrounding states such as Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts imposing regulations.
 - Janice Woods responded that she did. She shared an example from her experience renting space to medical professionals, stating that a nurse who became pregnant sought abortion services in Vermont and that it is easy for New Hampshire residents to travel out of state for such services. She stated that while those services are accessible elsewhere, pregnancy resource centers provide support afterward, which she described as lacking in other contexts.
- Senator Reardon then asked whether it was possible that organizations like Planned Parenthood might also feel under threat, given the broader national debate following *Roe v. Wade* overturned.
 - Janice Woods responded that both sides are mobilized and acknowledged that those organizations may feel concerned, but stated that she does not believe they are at risk of disappearing because services remain legally available and accessible through various providers.
 - She emphasized that pregnancy resource centers provide an alternative for individuals, particularly young women who may be scared or unsure where to go, offering support, guidance, and long-term assistance.
- Senator Reardon asked whether she believed both sides should be equally protected.
 - Janice Woods responded that she did not see a need to protect Planned Parenthood because she believes those services are already protected within the existing system, and that the group she views as being at risk are those offering alternatives.

Sylvia Springer testified in support of the bill. She referenced Harriet Dame, and noted that her portrait hangs nearby and described her as a courageous woman who dedicated her life to saving lives. She stated that during the Civil War, Harriet Dame cared for wounded soldiers, including enemy soldiers, and that her work was not political but centered on preserving life. She said that pregnancy resource centers and those who volunteer with them reflect that same mission of valuing and saving lives.

- She argued that government and politics should have no place in that work. She cited a passage from the Bible, specifically Philippians 2:3–5, stating that people should act with humility and value others above themselves. She said that the people who operate pregnancy resource centers embody this principle by prioritizing the lives of mothers and their babies.
- She then referenced Article 2 of the New Hampshire Constitution, which describes natural rights. She interpreted this as including the ability for expectant mothers to experience the joy of having a baby and for centers to help defend life and support those mothers. She also cited Article 4 regarding rights of conscience, stating that these rights are unalienable and that pregnancy resource centers operate based on the conscience of those who run them. She argued that the state constitution was written to ensure that government cannot interfere with these rights.
- She urged the committee to vote in support of the bill to ensure that the New Hampshire Constitution is honored and that privately run pregnancy resource centers can operate without government interference. She referenced the hall of flags nearby, noting that they bear bloodstains from soldiers who fought for the nation and the constitution, and urged lawmakers to remember their oath to uphold those principles.
- She addressed the point that there is currently no government interference with pregnancy resource centers, acknowledging that it is not happening at present, but argued that preventative action is wise. She compared the situation to past issues where, in her view, protections were not in place early enough, stating that a similar proactive approach should be taken here.

Katherine Kelley testified in support of the bill as a representative of the Penacook Pregnancy Center in Manchester, New Hampshire, and stated that the center has been operating for 13 years. She stated that the reason the bill is needed is because the organization provides valuable services for free without receiving any government or taxpayer funding.

- She stated that she wants to protect these services for future generations, emphasizing the importance of planning ahead rather than focusing only on the present.
- She gave examples of material support provided, including purchasing 65 car seats in one year, along with cribs, high chairs, diapers, wipes, and other essential items. She clarified that the center is non-medical and functions as a resource center.
- She noted that it is located one block from Planned Parenthood and stated that they encourage women to continue their pregnancies while offering support for whatever needs arise. She concluded her remarks and thanked the committee.

Tara Bishop testified in support. She introduced herself as a board member of the Penacook Pregnancy Center and stated that the non-profit has operated for 13 years without federal or local government funding and without lobbyists, and that those involved participate voluntarily out of a desire to help others.

- She explained that many of their clients are immigrants who may need assistance with immigration-related issues, and that the center helps connect them with appropriate resources and medical facilities. She emphasized that the center provides long-term support, stating that unlike what she described as a one-time service model elsewhere, their organization continues to assist clients over time.
- She provided an example of a woman who had previously received help from the center eight or nine years earlier and returned during a subsequent pregnancy seeking assistance again, which the center provided. She described additional support such as organizing baby showers and long-term material and emotional assistance.
- She shared a specific example of a woman from Brazil who was dropped off outside Planned Parenthood in winter, did not speak English, and did not feel comfortable entering. She stated that someone helped connect her with a translator and brought her to the pregnancy center, and that the woman ultimately became connected with a local family and remained in the community. She stated that such outcomes demonstrate the broader support network the center provides.
- She then discussed the center's involvement in funding a Safe Haven baby box in Manchester. She stated that the organization donated nearly \$45,000 to support the installation of the box, including \$17,620 for the unit and approximately \$27,000 for construction and compliance work. She stated that the box is located at the Central Fire Station on Pine Street and that Manchester will be the first location north of Pennsylvania to have one. She

noted that 77 babies have been saved nationwide through such boxes and that New Hampshire would become the 24th state with one.

- Senator Altschiller asked whether the organization is affiliated with Heartbeat International.
 - Tara Bishop responded that they are members.
 - Senator Altschiller then asked about intake forms and whether client information is shared with that organization.
 - Tara Bishop responded that she is a board member and does not conduct intakes, but stated that the organization does not share individual patient data, only aggregate numbers such as the number of clients served, and does not provide medical information.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether the center collects medical information such as pregnancy status.
 - Tara Bishop responded that the center offers free pregnancy tests and would therefore record whether someone is pregnant, but reiterated that the organization is not a medical provider. She explained that the center provides referrals for healthcare, housing, and other services, as well as material assistance such as formula, car seats, cribs, diapers, and wipes.
- Senator Altschiller asked how confidentiality is maintained given that the organization is not subject to HIPAA requirements.
 - Tara Bishop responded that intake information is kept in locked files and handled confidentially by staff, though she deferred to the director for more detailed procedures.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether the center counsels against abortion services.
 - Tara Bishop responded that they discuss all options, including parenting, adoption, and abortion, but that the organization is pro-life and does not provide referrals for abortion. She noted again that Planned Parenthood is located nearby and that individuals are aware of its location.

Kellie Ljungholm testified in support of the bill. She introduced herself as the executive director of a pregnancy center in Concord and stated that her center is a medical facility. She explained that in addition to medical services, the center provides parenting classes, fatherhood mentoring, and abortion recovery programs for women.

- She emphasized that her organization is 100% donor-funded, and does not accept any taxpayer money, and does not bill clients. She stated that the center mobilizes hundreds of volunteers and provides thousands of dollars in services to the community through education and material assistance.
- She stated that their work reduces strain on public systems by stabilizing families. She explained that parenting education can reduce crisis-driven emergency visits, material support like diapers and formula can prevent families from needing public assistance, and emotional and mental health support can prevent long-term crisis care costs.
- She stated that the organization is not political but acts as a community safety net, supporting women before, during, and after pregnancy. She said the bill would ensure that centers like hers can continue operating without intimidation or harassment.
- She stated that Jeanne Shaheen had previously described such centers as “fake clinics” on her website. She also stated that after the Dobbs decision, she received a call from someone associated with what she referred to as “Jane’s Revenge,” who told her where her three adult children lived. She stated that her building had been spray-painted multiple times with messages calling it a “fake clinic.” She said these experiences occurred in New Hampshire and argued that this demonstrated the need for protection.
- She added that her center uses an electronic health record system and clarified that only licensed medical personnel have access to medical information, specifically the medical director, who is a doctor at Concord Hospital, and two registered nurses.
- Senator Gannon then asked how the bill would protect her from vandalism and whether she had reported the incidents.
 - Kellie Ljungholm responded that she had reported them and clarified that she was referencing earlier questions about whether witnesses had experienced harassment.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether the state of New Hampshire had ever interfered with her organization’s operations, required them to post information contrary to their mission, or otherwise hindered their fundraising, volunteers, or services.
 - Kellie Ljungholm responded that she believed the statement by Jeanne Shaheen describing centers as fake clinics constituted interference.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether in the past five years the organization had been unable to fundraise, recruit volunteers, or serve clients.

- o Kellie Ljungholm responded that they had not experienced those issues but stated that she had seen colleagues in neighboring states face such problems.
- Senator Altschiller asked if her concern was that what has happened in neighboring states could eventually happen in New Hampshire.
 - o Kellie Ljungholm agreed, stating that while New Hampshire has not taken such actions so far, she is concerned that it could under different leadership.
- Senator Reardon then acknowledged her experience with harassment and asked whether, if the legislature were to pass protections for pregnancy resource centers, it should also protect reproductive healthcare providers.
 - o Kellie Ljungholm responded that protections should apply to every citizen.

Vera Cheeseborough the executive director of Aspire Women’s Center, testified in support of the bill. She stated that every day the organization works with women and families facing unexpected pregnancies, often during overwhelming moments in their lives, and that she was there to express support for the bill.

- She stated that Aspire is a medical pregnancy center operating under licensed medical professionals and is committed to providing accurate, evidence-based information. She explained that the center’s role is not to direct decisions but to provide a safe and supportive space where patients can slow down and process their situation.
- She stated that the center walks patients through all options, including parenting, adoption, and medical information about abortion, so they can understand what each involves.
- She said the center also provides medical services such as pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, and STI testing to help patients better understand their health, pregnancy, and timeline. She emphasized that all services are provided at no cost to the patient and no cost to the state of New Hampshire, and that the center does not profit from any decision patients make.
- She stated that centers like Aspire are supported by local communities, including individuals, churches, and businesses, and that this reflects community support for providing compassionate care and accurate information.
- She stated that when women are given time, space, and clear information, they are able to make decisions they feel confident about, and that this is what she described as “true choice.” She argued that choice is not just having options, but

fully understanding those options before making a decision with long-term consequences.

- Senator Gannon asked about the information provided to patients, noting that the center discusses parenting, adoption, and abortion, and asked whether providing information about abortion is related to the patient bill of rights.
 - Vera Cheeseborough responded that the center aims to be truthful and provide accurate information. She stated that as a faith-based nonprofit, the organization is not required to comply with HIPAA, but chooses to implement privacy policies to protect patient information.
 - She stated that they use electronic health records accessible only to registered nurses and doctors, including a medical director, and that they provide information based on what the patient requests. She explained that if a patient does not want to hear about a particular option, such as abortion, adoption, or parenting, the center will respect that and not discuss it.
- Senator Altschiller asked about the organization's affiliation with Heartbeat International and other groups.
 - Vera Cheeseborough responded that Aspire is affiliated with organizations including Heartbeat International, Care Net, and Pre-Born, but does not share individual patient information with them. She stated that only aggregate data is shared, such as the number of patients served or services provided, and that those organizations do not request individual data.
- Senator Altschiller then asked about the electronic health record system used by the center and whether it is affiliated with those organizations.
 - Vera Cheeseborough stated that she was not certain of the specific platform or affiliations and noted that many centers use different systems.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether patient information collected is protected under HIPAA.
 - Vera Cheeseborough responded that the organization is not required to comply with HIPAA, but that licensed medical professionals working at the center are required to follow HIPAA regulations. She added that the organization signs agreements with any platform handling information to protect patient data and ensure it is not publicly accessible or distributed.
- Senator Altschiller asked what recourse a patient would have if their medical information were breached, noting that HIPAA provides protections in other settings.

- o Vera Cheeseborough responded that she was not sure what specific recourse would apply in that situation, and stated that in the organization's 40 years of existence, such an issue had not occurred.
- Senator Altschiller raised concerns about the broader environment in New Hampshire, noting that there are significantly more pregnancy resource centers than abortion providers and that there has been no legislative effort to regulate these centers, while there have been repeated legislative efforts related to reproductive healthcare providers. The senator questioned why pregnancy centers would be at risk in that context.
 - o Vera Cheeseborough responded by comparing the bill to preventative maintenance, stating that just as people maintain cars or go to annual medical checkups to prevent problems, the bill serves as a proactive measure. She stated that given developments in other states, it makes sense to put protections in place before problems arise, asking why the state would not take that precaution.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether she would support an amendment that would also provide protections for abortion providers and reproductive healthcare centers.
 - o Vera Cheeseborough responded that she would support such an amendment, noting that while the two types of centers do not refer to each other, she would support extending protections broadly.

Michael King testified in support of the bill. He introduced himself as the president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, describing it as a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to strengthening families in Massachusetts. He stated that the organization supports pregnancy resource centers because of what he described as their life-saving and life-giving work for women and their babies. He explained that he was invited by New Hampshire advocates to testify about why the bill is necessary, drawing from firsthand experience in Massachusetts.

- He stated that in his view “the war on pregnancy resource centers is real” and described what he characterized as efforts by pro-abortion advocates and elected officials in Massachusetts to undermine these centers.
- He stated that prior to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* overturned in 2022, pregnancy centers in Massachusetts had operated for decades without incident, but afterward activists began targeting them. He described incidents of vandalism including broken glass, graffiti, and threats. He also stated that lawmakers proposed legislation to penalize centers for “deceptive practices” without clearly defining those practices, though he said those efforts were defeated.

- He stated that in 2024 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health launched what he described as a nearly \$2 million taxpayer-funded campaign criticizing pregnancy centers as misleading and a public health threat. He stated that this was followed by threats to healthcare providers' licenses and investigations. He also referenced abortion pill reversal, describing it as safe and effective, and stated that his organization is currently suing the state over related actions. He argued that if similar circumstances can occur in Massachusetts, they could occur in New Hampshire too.
- Senator Altschiller questioned him about his mention of abortion pill reversal and asked him to explain what it is.
 - Michael King responded that it is a way to “save the life of a baby” but stated that he was not a medical doctor and declined to provide further technical explanation due to his self proclaimed lack of medical expertise.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether his organization is faith-based.
 - Michael King confirmed that it is explicitly Christian, including Catholics.
 - Senator Altschiller asked whether it was appropriate for a religious organization from another state to influence New Hampshire law.
 - Michael King responded that he was simply there to testify in support of the bill.

Jason Hennessy testified in support of the bill on behalf of New Hampshire Right to Life. He stated that New Hampshire has 19 pregnancy centers that provide services such as diapers, strollers, clothing, counseling, parenting classes, ultrasounds, and housing, all at no cost. He stated that these centers provide over \$1.5 million in services annually without taxpayer funding and described them as charitable organizations representing “the best of us.”

- He argued that protections are needed because of both governmental and physical attacks in other states such as California and New Jersey, and stated that similar actions could occur in New Hampshire. He noted that lawsuits and regulatory uncertainty can drain the limited resources of pregnancy centers. He also referenced a physical attack against a pregnancy center in Littleton, New Hampshire, and stated that some Democratic politicians have expressed interest in regulating these centers.
- He argued that if political control in New Hampshire were to change, similar regulatory efforts seen in other states could emerge. He stated that the bill does not grant special privileges but simply prevents discrimination against centers for not providing or referring for abortion.

- He discussed differences between this bill and “shield laws,” referencing a case involving a New York doctor sending abortion pills to Texas and being shielded from enforcement actions. He argued that such protections should not be extended in that way. He also cited what he described as partisan behavior by state agencies, referencing prior disputes involving funding restrictions for abortion providers and actions by the executive council.
- Senator Altschiller then asked about a Massachusetts case involving alleged misdiagnosis at a pregnancy center and questioned whether this bill would shield centers from liability.
 - Jason Hennessy responded by pointing to the bill language, emphasizing that it only prevents discrimination based on not providing abortion services and does not create immunity from liability or general regulation. He stated that centers would still be subject to all applicable laws.
- Senator Altschiller then asked whether he would support an amendment extending similar protections to abortion providers.
 - Jason Hennessy responded that he did not see a need for that, arguing that large providers already have significant resources and lobbying power, whereas pregnancy centers do not. He reiterated that the bill is focused on preventing discrimination rather than granting broad exemptions.

Rachel Potter testified in opposition to the bill on behalf of ACLU of New Hampshire. She stated that the bill is unnecessary and that similar legislation in other states elevates a particular ideological viewpoint over the rights of pregnant individuals to receive accurate medical information and make informed decisions.

- She expressed concern that the bill would grant broad statutory protections to organizations that are explicitly mission-driven and anti-abortion, shielding them from oversight and accountability standards that apply to other healthcare providers. She argued that this creates unequal treatment and undermines fairness and neutrality in law.
- She stated that existing constitutional protections already prevent the government from restricting or compelling speech based on viewpoint, and that this bill goes beyond those protections by granting special legal advantages. She warned that the bill could limit the ability of future legislatures to regulate issues such as misrepresentation or unsafe practices, and argued that it could undermine patient safety.

- She further argued that no organization should receive preferential treatment based on ideology and that all providers interacting with the public should be held to consistent standards of transparency and truthful conduct.
- Senator Altschiller asked her whether the bill creates a carveout for organizations affiliated with Heartbeat International and whether it protects viewpoints that could include support for criminalizing abortion.
 - Rachel Potter responded that the bill is not necessary for free speech protections and reiterated that it elevates organizations based on viewpoint by shielding them in statute, confirming her concern that it provides protections tied to ideology.

Liz Canada testified in opposition to the bill on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and the Planned Parenthood New Hampshire Action Fund. She stated that while the bill does not explicitly name Planned Parenthood, it is clearly an abortion-related bill and is fundamentally about abortion. She referenced earlier testimony stating that removing the word “abortion” from the bill would make it unworkable, agreeing with that characterization and arguing that the purpose of the bill is to send an anti-abortion message and codify it into state law.

- She responded to earlier testimony describing the bill as “preventative maintenance,” stating that from her perspective and that of reproductive rights advocates, there have already been real and ongoing attacks on reproductive healthcare providers.
- She cited multiple examples, including the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* overturned, which removed federal constitutional protections for abortion. She also referenced actions by the New Hampshire Executive Council, which she stated had repeatedly voted down contracts for organizations such as Planned Parenthood, Lovering Health Center, and Equality Health Center since 2021 specifically because they provide abortion services. She stated that as a result, those organizations have received no state funding under the family planning program.
- She further testified that abortion-related services remain under threat at the federal level, including uncertainty surrounding Title X funding and the loss of Medicaid reimbursements for Planned Parenthood organizations in some areas. She stated that Planned Parenthood continues to serve Medicaid patients without reimbursement in some cases, describing this as an ongoing attack on healthcare delivery.
- She stated that there have been numerous legislative proposals aimed at restricting abortion access or targeting reproductive healthcare providers.

- She emphasized that while some testimony suggested there have been no attacks on pregnancy resource centers, there have been repeated and concrete attacks on reproductive healthcare providers. She stated that there have been multiple opportunities for the New Hampshire legislature to proactively protect abortion rights in statute or in the state constitution, but those efforts have been rejected.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether, in the current biennium, there had been approximately a dozen legislative proposals affecting reproductive healthcare and whether funding had been withheld since 2021.
 - Liz Canada responded that family planning funding has continued for some community health centers but has been intentionally denied to providers that offer abortion services.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether there had ever been legislation introduced in New Hampshire to regulate or restrict crisis pregnancy centers.
 - Liz Canada responded definitively that there have been no such bills introduced. She stated that pregnancy centers are already able to operate freely under First Amendment protections and that there have been no legislative attempts to regulate or restrict them.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether it was accurate to say that one type of pregnancy-related provider has faced no regulation and has grown in number, while reproductive healthcare providers have faced repeated legislative and funding restrictions.
 - Liz Canada responded that reproductive healthcare providers have indeed faced numerous legislative attacks and restrictions and that some health centers have closed in New Hampshire and elsewhere. She also noted that vandalism has occurred at reproductive healthcare facilities, including a Planned Parenthood center in Claremont that has since closed, and emphasized that such acts should not happen to any provider.
- Senator Altschiller asked specifically about the closure of the Claremont facility.
 - Liz Canada responded that healthcare facilities close for many reasons, including the broader challenges of delivering care in rural areas. She emphasized that New Hampshire is a rural state and that maintaining healthcare access is difficult, urging the legislature to support policies that keep healthcare providers open.
- Senator Altschiller stated that pregnancy resource centers have opened in the Claremont and Lebanon areas and suggested that those centers, if protected under the bill, would not be required to provide abortion information, referrals, or certain privacy protections.

- o Liz Canada responded that she would provide a research report showing that when Planned Parenthood centers close, there are not enough alternative providers to absorb patients. She emphasized that Planned Parenthood offers a wide range of healthcare services beyond abortion and that for many patients it is their only provider. She stated that pregnancy resource centers do not provide equivalent healthcare services and therefore cannot replace those providers.
- Senator Gannon referenced funding for rural healthcare, stating that hundreds of millions of dollars has been allocated to support rural healthcare in New Hampshire and asked whether that would help address access issues.
 - o Liz Canada responded that she welcomed additional funding but expressed concern that Medicaid changes and other factors still put healthcare providers at risk of closure, stating that the future of healthcare access in the state remains uncertain.

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