



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 13, 2015

California Forces Pregnancy Centers to Inform Clients of Abortion Options

California Governor Jerry Brown (D) signed into law Friday a bill that requires crisis-pregnancy centers, which encourage women to bear children rather than abort them, to “distribute information on where and how to obtain a state-funded abortion,” reports [LifeNews.com](#).

The law, which was sponsored by NARAL Pro-Choice California, is officially known as the Reproductive FACT Act, but pro-lifers have dubbed it the “Bully Bill.” It passed both houses of the California legislature on a party-line vote, with Democrats in favor.

The law mandates that pregnancy centers offering medical services either post the following notice or distribute it to all clients, even going so far as to specify the size of the font for the notice:

California has public programs that provide immediate free or low-cost access to comprehensive family planning services (including all FDA-approved methods of contraception), prenatal care, and abortion for eligible women. To determine whether you qualify, contact the county social services office at [insert the telephone number].

Pregnancy centers that do not offer medical services are required to post or distribute a notice informing clients of that fact.

Pro-life groups are up in arms over the law, arguing quite persuasively that it infringes on constitutionally protected rights including freedom of speech.

“Every woman should have all the information she needs to care for herself and her family during an unexpected pregnancy,” Jor-El Godsey, vice president of pregnancy-center association Heartbeat International, told [Pregnancy Help News](#). “The issue with this bill is that it does — despite its authors’ assertions to the contrary — trample on the First Amendment rights of locally funded grassroots organizations, while forcing these organizations to effectively refer for abortions.”

“Does the government have a right to tell a newspaper what to write, a preacher what to preach, a private school what to teach? Of course not,” Assemblywoman Shannon Grove (R-Bakersfield) said in a [statement](#). “So why is it okay for the government to force prolife pregnancy centers against their will to advertise and promote government abortion services?”

“Democrat legislators claimed this is necessary because the information provided by prolife pregnancy care centers is not ‘fully-informed,’” Grove added. “So according to this logic, if the government finds that your message isn’t ‘fully-informed,’ it now has a right to compel you to do say [sic] things you do not believe in. The founding fathers would be rolling over in their graves.”

In a [statement](#) accompanying his introduction of the bill into the Assembly, Assemblyman David Chiu (D-San Francisco) argued that pregnancy centers represent “a growing and alarming movement ...





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working to mislead women in order to achieve their political ideology. We have a responsibility as lawmakers to make sure that the information given to women who are making their own healthcare decisions is accurate and timely.”

That same press release refers to the supposed “public health threat posed by anti-choice crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs),” citing a NARAL “undercover investigation of CPCs” that revealed “a disturbing pattern of medical misinformation and manipulation of women.”

However, as Assemblyman James Gallagher (R-Nicolaus) pointed out during a Judiciary Committee hearing, that NARAL report had “zero source documentation ... no videotapes, no recording, pure hearsay.” That’s a far cry from the repeated video recordings of Planned Parenthood officials’ eagerly selling aborted babies’ body parts to the highest bidder. Indeed, as [Pregnancy Help News](#) observed, “If pregnancy centers truly are handing out wrong information and lying in their advertising, why can’t anyone bust them?” All backers of the California law had on their side was that single NARAL report; there should have been a mountain of verifiable evidence if their assertions were true.

The real mindset behind the law was revealed by Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego), who claims she once visited a crisis-pregnancy center when she found herself unexpectedly pregnant years earlier. “When an unplanned pregnancy becomes a child, it’s not an unwanted child,” Gonzalez said. “It is very much a decision.”

“Rep. Gonzalez’ assertion that ‘choice’ can transform an ‘unplanned pregnancy’ into a ‘wanted child’ perfectly captures the deeply unscientific and unproven grounds of this Bully Bill,” Godsey told [Pregnancy Help News](#). “It is curious that a lawmaker pushing for a bill under the auspices of healthcare information would need to resort to such a straightforwardly un-scientific and false statement as this.”

Minority Floor Leader Kristin Olsen (R-Modesto) made it clear which side of the debate has faith in women to make the right decisions. “We should trust women to make their own choices, and this bill prevents that,” Olsen said during the floor debate over the bill. “Women choose to seek assistance from these pregnancy centers. Nobody forces them to go, nobody forces them to stay. They choose to go and they have the option to leave at any time.”

Assemblyman Jim Patterson (R-Fresno) called the bill “an effort to force objectionable, state-mandated speech on pro-life pregnancy care centers.”

“Two of my adopted children and all three of my grandchildren are the living witnesses of the profound and life-affirming options these centers provide,” Patterson continued. “Privately-funded Pregnancy Resource Centers, and the compassionate people who volunteer at them, have a First Amendment right to Freedom of Speech. And it is our duty as officers of the state of California to protect that right, not to assault it.”

There are some bright spots among the dark clouds of the new law. For one thing, as Marie Leatherby, director of Sacramento Life Center, told [LifeNews.com](#), “We must really be hurting the abortion business if they have to come after us and have us advertise for them.” For another, the law will almost certainly be challenged in court and stands a good chance of being struck down as unconstitutional, as happened to similar laws in Austin, Texas; Baltimore and Montgomery County, Md.; and New York, N.Y. Meanwhile, California pro-lifers can surely look forward to the day when the state forces abortion clinics to refer women to crisis-pregnancy centers — just to make sure they’re “fully informed.”



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