



NARAL
Pro-Choice Washington



PRESS RELEASE

January 13, 2010

Contact:

Elaine Rose, CEO
Planned Parenthood VOTES! Washington
(206) 328-7735

Lauren Simonds, Executive Director
NARAL Pro-Choice Washington
(206) 624-1990

Sara Ainsworth, Senior Counsel
Lisa Stone, Executive Director
Legal Voice
(206) 682-9552, ext. 107

Lonnie Johns-Brown
National Organization for Women
(360) 878-0255

Bill Introduced Today Aimed at Protecting Women's Health

Olympia, WA – Today, the Washington State Senate and House introduced companion bills that would protect women's health by improving accuracy, transparency and privacy at limited service pregnancy centers, House Bill 2837 and Senate Bill 6452. Women's advocates Legal Voice, NARAL Pro-Choice Washington, Planned Parenthood VOTES! Washington and the National Organization for Women (NOW) are calling the bill long overdue.

Limited service pregnancy centers are non-profit organizations – not medical clinics – that typically offer free pregnancy tests, “pregnancy options counseling,” ultrasound imaging, some free baby items and referrals to adoption and social services. They are usually operated with a religious affiliation by volunteers, and are opposed to abortion and most forms of birth control. Some call themselves “clinics,” but most provide no medical care other than free pregnancy tests and ultrasounds without medical diagnosis. Women who have sought help from such centers have gone there believing they were going to receive medical care and unbiased pregnancy options

counseling from licensed professionals. Instead, they often received false or misleading information about abortion, pregnancy, contraception, or sexually transmitted infections, had their requested medical records withheld, and were denied needed referrals for reproductive health care.

“This isn’t about burdening these centers. It is about establishing standards for transparency and accuracy for high-quality care,” said state Rep. Judy Clibborn, D-Mercer Island.

“Women deserve the most accurate information and guidance that can be provided,” said state Sen. Rodney Tom, D-Bellevue. “For example, pregnancy results that are immediately known should be immediately disclosed.”

There are at least 46 limited service pregnancy centers operating in Washington State, in 21 counties and 33 legislative districts.

The legislation, sponsored by Clibborn and Tom, would

- require limited service pregnancy centers to disclose to people seeking services that the center does not provide service or referrals for abortion or comprehensive birth control and that it does not provide medical care for pregnant women.
- require these centers to protect the privacy of health care information collected from people seeking services.
- require limited service pregnancy centers to provide tested women with written pregnancy test results immediately.
- protect consumer health by requiring that all reproductive health information provided to consumers be scientifically and medically accurate.

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