

Submission  
on the  
Transparent Advertising and Notification of Pregnancy Counselling Services Bill 2005  
To the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Parliament House Canberra ACT  
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By Mrs Liz Preston

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I have been involved with the provision of crisis pregnancy counselling for 10 years. Together with the hundreds if not thousands of (mostly) women who have given their time (mostly) voluntarily over the past thirty or so years, I decided to get involved to offer counselling and support so that no woman had to think there was no one out there who cared about her and her situation when she faced a pregnancy in difficult circumstances.

Some argue that abortion can be a solution to her problem. I do not share that view. Apart from the inevitable death of the unborn child, there is evidence to show that abortion can cause emotional and physical complications for the woman. See for example the recently published paper *Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health* by David M. Fergusson et al, **Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry** 47:1 (2006), pp.16-24. (Far from “improving public health”, which section c of the Objects says this Bill is supposed to do, research such as the afore-mentioned paper indicates that abortion creates public health problems.)

Holding this view does not stop me from being able to show empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard, hallmarks of the person centred approach to counselling. Any counsellor, whether pro-life or pro-abortion, needs to be highly self-aware, recognising their own values and those of the client. This counselling setting is not an opportunity for advice giving. (Incongruously giving advice is indicated in section d of the Objects.)

However, because abortion takes the life of an unborn child and because it can cause emotional and physical complications for the woman, these things do stop me from being able to give information to a person about how to get an abortion.

Clearly abortion is detrimental and therefore, ethically there can be no requirement for a counsellor to give a referral for something that is detrimental.

It also follows that there can be no justification for requiring statements such as “This service does not provide referrals for terminations of pregnancy” or something similar to be included in advertising. There is no logical necessity for those who recognise the harm that abortion does to be required to state that they do not refer for abortion.

**It is pure ideology, driven by those who demand abortion “rights”, that the requirements of this Bill are being proposed and this must not be given into. The Bill should be rejected.**