



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on February 7, 2011

## NYC Council Cracks Down on Crisis Pregnancy Centers

NYC Councilwoman Jessica Lappin, a Democrat and former Planned Parenthood clinic escort, has introduced legislation within the Council that demonizes and stigmatizes the groups, whose “Abortion Alternatives” advertisements are seen throughout the city, including on subway cars.



The [legislation](#) will require Crisis Pregnancy Centers to post disclosure statements on its website and in its advertising and literature in addition to displaying them at its places of business. The legislation would require the centers to disclose to clients that they do not provide abortion services or contraceptive devices, or make referrals to organizations that do. Centers that do not have licensed medical personnel onsite would also have to disclose that information. It bars centers from disclosing personal or health information without patient consent. CPCs that fail to comply would be fined \$200 to \$1,000 and face possible closure.

“These are anti-choice centers masquerading as health clinics,” said Lappin, a Manhattan Democrat. “Women who are scared and vulnerable and having a very tough decision to make have a right to factually accurate medical information, and the fact that these folks would purposely try to mislead them is not right.”

There are roughly 2,300 Crisis Pregnancy Centers that counsel more than half a million women a year nationwide, advocates estimate. In New York State there are more than 150, with more than a dozen in the five NYC boroughs.

While pro-abortion advocates claim that the legislation is aimed at “protecting women’s health [sic],” the bill is another underhanded attempt at criminalizing the pro-life movement in NYC, where the number of pregnancies ending in abortion staggers at over 41 percent, according to some reports. The push to outlaw agencies that provide abortion alternatives comes at the same time as a movement among city religious leaders to take action on the high abortion rate.

According to [research](#) culled from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute calculated NYC’s abortion ratio, a measure of the number of pregnancies ending in abortion divided by the number of live births, and found the following:

Using New York State Population data from 2008 and abortion data from 2009, the New York City abortion rate in 2009 was 46.5. In 2005, the latest year for which data are available, the US



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abortion rate was 19.4 according to the CDC.

The second method is what the CDC calls the abortion ratio. When the CDC says abortion ratio, they mean the number of abortions per 1,000 live births. In 2009 NYC had a CDC abortion ratio of 688. The US had a CDC abortion ratio of 292 in 2005.

The third method, which was included in the Guttmacher Institute's most recent report on abortion statistics for 2005, is what they call the abortion ratio. When the Guttmacher Institute's researchers say abortion ratio, what they mean is "abortions per 100 pregnancies ending in abortion or live birth," which is to say, abortions as a percentage of all pregnancies excluding miscarriages. In 2009, NYC had a Guttmacher abortion ratio of 41%. The US had a Guttmacher abortion ratio of 23% in 2005.

That means that in New York City, 41% of all pregnancies except those which ended in miscarriage ended in abortion. In the Bronx, the abortion ratio reaches 48%. By all three measures, NYC has rates far beyond the national average. But the abortion ratio puts it in perspective: in parts of NYC, women choose to end nearly half of their pregnancies with abortion.

Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zweibel, who heads legislative efforts at the Orthodox Jewish advocacy group Agudath Israel of America, said the [following](#):

Agudath Israel of America, and the Orthodox Jewish constituency we represent, opposes abortion on demand. From our perspective, the destruction of fetal life is not justifiable other than in certain extraordinary circumstances. We would welcome the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

However, even amongst those who disagree with us, there is broad acknowledgement that abortion is a moral and social tragedy. We've been hearing for many years from pro-choice supporters that abortion should be "safe, legal, and rare."

Well, if that's the goal, we've clearly, abysmally failed — especially here in New York City. In 2009, 41% of all pregnancies in the city — 87,274 pregnancies — were terminated by abortion. Going back 10 years, the total number of abortions performed in New York City from 2000 through 2009 was well over 900,000.

Statistics can be numbing. Yet the magnitude of the human tragedy these numbers reveal is so great that they cry out for urgent attention. That's why we're here today.

From our perspective at Agudath Israel of America, and our experience in the Orthodox Jewish community, the best approach of all is to take steps to change the culture in which our young people are growing up — a culture that glorifies promiscuity and mocks responsibility — or at least shield our impressionable youth from the harmful influences of that culture.

Crisis Pregnancy Centers play a solitary and vital role in attempting to change the culture that promotes unwanted pregnancy, and encourages youth to take responsibility for their actions and bodies by promoting sexual abstinence. Despite this role, individuals like Lappin deem it necessary to wage war against what is perhaps Planned Parenthood's main competitor for the hearts, minds, and souls of women who find themselves with unwanted pregnancies.

The legislation, Bill 371, introduced in the NYC Council in November, will shortly come up for public debate. It is being cosponsored by 23 other members of the NYC Council, including Councilwoman Margaret Chin and Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito, the latter of whom is [under fire](#) for her request that members of the NYC Council support pardoning a convicted terrorist: Oscar Lopez-Rivera, of the terror group FALN. According to an [article](#) published in the *City Journal* by National Humanities



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Medal winner Richard Brookhiser, Chin's political career was directly facilitated by her work with the Communist Workers Party, a Maoist group that has infiltrated Democratic Party politics in cities such as Chicago and New York City.

The vast majority of legislative cosponsors are also members of the NYC Council Progressive Caucus and/or the Working Families Party, which has collaborated with the Democratic Socialists of America, Communist Party USA, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America on campaigns such as the One Nation Rally and Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

While Lappin claims that there exists the need to promote "truth-in-advertising," such logic is flawed. Christopher Slattery, president of the Expectant Mother Care network of Crisis Pregnancy Centers, explained that his clinics have only ever run ads promising "Free Abortion Alternatives," "Free Confidential Options Counseling," and "Free Pregnancy Tests," all of which they provide. According to the [National Review](#):

Some advocates of the bill testified that the centers "look just like a doctor's office" (they don't); others said that the staff wear scrubs to look like medical professionals (they don't; the licensed and certified ultrasound techs in some clinics do, as do the doctors who work part-time in some clinics). Silliest of all, one person testified that "EMC" sounds very medical.

Slattery accused the council of championing the "abortion industry's agenda," adding, "This is an outrageous interference with an extremely helpful and positive outreach to often disadvantaged expectant mothers. How many other New York City businesses will be required to say on their doors what services they don't offer?"

Thomas Glessner, president of the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, a group that provides legal counsel and training to about 1,200 crisis pregnancy centers nationwide, [said](#) the vast majority of women are pleased with the counseling they receive. The bill is a "political attack" from abortion-rights advocates, he said. "They are not going to be happy ever until, frankly, they close centers down," he said.

A similar legislative campaign was launched previously in Baltimore, Maryland, where in 2009 the city council passed a "disclosure ordinance" similar to the legislation under debate in the NYC Council. The legislation, however, has been ruled unconstitutional, in a blow to the pro-abortion movement. U.S. District Judge Marvin J. Garbis ruled that the ordinance requiring crisis pregnancy centers to tell their clients they are not going to help women get abortions was in violation of the First Amendment, in which the right to free speech is protected. The judge [said](#) in a [written statement](#):

Whether a provider of pregnancy-related services is "pro-life" or "pro-choice," it is for the provider — not the government — to decide when and how to discuss abortion and birth-control method[s]. The Government cannot, consistent with the First Amendment, require a "pro-life" pregnancy-related service center to post a sign.

It is untenable that pro-life counseling centers would be forced to "disclose" that they do not offer abortions, which should be obvious, given their "Abortion Alternatives" advertisements, especially when Planned Parenthood and other abortion clinics are not legally required to offer alternatives to abortion, such as adoption referrals. According to attorney David Kinkopf and NYC Councilman Daniel J. Halloran, the proposed legislation amounts to "viewpoint discrimination," and Halloran points to the fallacy of people believing that groups with names such as Sisters To Life, Bridge To Life or Maternity Birth Care Services could possibly believe that such agencies commit feticide.



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Slattery; Halloran; the New York State Catholic Conference; Dallas-area Pastor Stephen Broden; and the Rev. Michel Faulkner, the Republican candidate for Congress in Rep. Charlie Rangel's district, have initiated a campaign to "Save the Life Centers," and are requesting that supporters sign an online petition to be delivered to the NYC Council: <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/41496.html>



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