**Testimony of Kathy Griesmyer**

**HB 516 – Ultrasound Requirements**

**Before Senate State Affairs Committee**

**March 10, 2016**

The ACLU of Idaho stands before you today in opposition to HB 516.

Informed consent is essential for a woman to fully participate in health care decisions so she can make the best decisions based on her unique circumstances. However, when medical providers talk to a woman about the risks involved with childbirth they don’t do so with the intent of talking her out of giving birth. Instead, providers want to educate and support her, so she can be prepared and take good care of her health. It should be the same with other medical procedures, including abortion. Education and information should support a woman, help her make the best decision, and enable her to best care for her health and well-being.

HB 516 is an attempt to shame women for a decision they’ve already made. This bill does not require a woman to seek a free ultrasound for any medically necessary reason. Instead it requires the Department of Health & Welfare to maintain a registry of free ultrasound providers, many of whom are non-medical facilities called crisis pregnancy centers, and compels providers to present such lists to women seeking abortion care. The legislation also does not compel the Department to ensure that providers, facilities and clinics to be included on the free ultrasound list are required to provide medically accurate information or to even have medically trained staff available to interpret the ultrasounds. This leaves women with no assurance that they’ll receive *medically* accurate information from *medically* trained staff. In essence, this legislation is about funneling pregnant women into these crisis centers without informing them about the facilities’ ideological driven agenda – including forcing women to watch anti-abortion films, slide shows, or photographs, submitting to hear biased lectures, and even at times refusing to provide information about or referrals for birth control and abortion care[[1]](#footnote-1).

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) states that statutes like the one being debated in HB 516 “are not designed to assure informed decision-making; instead they represent an unprecedented effort by the government to use physician communications as an instrument for discouraging pregnant women from exercising their constitutional right to make their own reproductive choices.” We agree with the APA that, “these laws intrude into the privacy of physician-patient communications and, in so doing, compromise the rights of both patients and physicians.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

This bill isn’t about helping a woman make the best decision for her circumstances and puts politics above a woman’s health. Every woman deserves to have medically accurate, unbiased information so that she can make the best choice for her and her family without the government interfering with her medical decisions. We urge you to vote no against HB 516 and keep it in committee.

1. *The Truth about Crisis Pregnancy Centers*. Tech. NARAL Pro-Choice America, 1 Jan. 2016. Web. 24 Feb. 2016. <http://www.prochoiceamerica.org/media/fact-sheets/abortion-cpcs.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. American Psychiatric Association. *Position Statement on Legislative Intrusion and Reproductive Choice*. American Psychiatric Association, Dec. 2013. Web. 24 Feb. 2016. <http://www.psychiatry.org/file%20library/about-apa/organization-documents-policies/policies/position-2013-legislation-reproductive-choice.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)