

The *Caring Families v. Hartford* Case

Case Name: *Caring Families Pregnancy Services Inc. v. City of Hartford*

Case Status: On April 18, Alliance Defending Freedom filed a complaint in federal court on behalf of Caring Families Pregnancy Services, challenging a City of Hartford (CT) ordinance meant to steer women away from pro-life pregnancy services.



Significance: Whether the government can force a pregnancy center to speak misleading messages that interfere with the center's ability to freely serve women.

Background: Caring Family Pregnancy Services is a private, faith-based, non-profit organization that offers free pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, options counseling, adoption referrals, parenting classes, Bible studies, support groups, and material resources like baby clothes, diapers, cribs, and car seats to women in the Hartford area. Caring Families also runs a mobile pregnancy care center called Mobile Care, which is operated out of a mobile unit and makes regularly scheduled visits to Hartford and other communities in Connecticut. Seeking to turn women away from this free, life-affirming help, however, the City of Hartford enacted Ordinance No. 25-17 in 2017. Applying only to pro-life organizations, the ordinance forces pro-life pregnancy help locations to post signage and begin conversations with a City-determined disclaimer that incorrectly implies the centers are not qualified to provide the free services they offer because there is not a medical provider on site at all times. The city threatens \$100 per day in fines for noncompliance with the ordinance, which went into effect four months after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a similar attempt to compel pro-life speech in *NIFLA v. Becerra*.

Key Points

- The City of Hartford is attempting to steer women away from life-affirming help.
- Many women resort to abortion because they feel it is their only choice; pregnancy centers offer women life-affirming choices and provide the support they need during this difficult time.
- Tolerance and respect for good-faith differences of opinion are essential in a diverse society like ours. They enable us to peacefully coexist with one another.

Key Facts

- The U.S. Supreme Court already ruled in *NIFLA v. Becerra* that pro-life pregnancy centers should be free to serve women without unjust government punishment.
- Hartford is intent on interfering with certain views about life, pregnancy, and motherhood.
- The ordinance exempts all entities except for pregnancy centers.
- Views about important issues like abortion change. But the First Amendment's enduring promise is that people of good will are free to live out their beliefs without facing government hostility or punishment.

The Bottom Line: Pregnancy centers should be free to serve women and offer the support they need without fear of unjust government punishment.