



Friday July 5, 2013

Governor Lincoln Chafee
82 Smith St
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Request to veto S298 Sub A and H5053 Sub A – An act relating to motor and other vehicles – registration of vehicles

Dear Governor Chafee,

On behalf of all the partners at the RI Coalition for Reproductive Justice, we request that you veto the so-called “Choose License Plate” bill, S298A and H5053A, that passed in the final days of this year’s legislative session.

The bill as amended would fund a religious organization called CareNet Rhode Island that, to the best of our knowledge, does not provide the full range of counseling options to women facing unintended pregnancies or abide by appropriate medical standards of care.

CareNet is a national umbrella organization with a mission rooted in religious doctrine, not delivery of medically accurate information or appropriate care to women facing difficult situations. According to their website:

Care Net is a Christ-centered ministry whose mission is to promote a culture of life within our society in order to serve people facing unplanned pregnancies and related sexual issues.

<https://www.care-net.org/aboutus/mission.php>

The ultimate aim of Care Net and its network of pregnancy centers is to share the love and truth of Jesus Christ in both word and deed. As a result, the hearts of women and men are being changed by Christ's love. In addition, those struggling with past abortions are finding God's healing and forgiveness.

<https://www.care-net.org/aboutus/>

We are also concerned about the First Amendment implications of this bill, as the state would essentially be serving as a conduit for donations to a clearly religious organization for religious purposes. For these reasons, we request your veto of this legislation. We appreciate your leadership in standing with women and broadening, not restricting, access to preventative reproductive health services. Should you need further information about the legislation going forward, please contact paula.hodges@ppsne.org or (401) 527-4559.

Respectfully,

Paula Hodges
Chair of the RI Coalition for Reproductive Justice
RI Director of Public Policy & Advocacy for
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

Steven Brown
Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union
of Rhode Island

Cc: Chief of Staff George Zainyeh
Director of Policy Kelly Mahoney, Office of the Governor
Director of Administration Richard Licht

The Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Justice exists to preserve, promote and protect all aspects of women’s reproductive health care and reproductive justice through advocacy and legislative action statewide and nationally.