



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics



An Enormous Difference for the Good

Dear Friends:

I first met Christopher Bell back in the 1970s. I was in the seminary and working as a volunteer at Covenant House. Chris Bell was already a leading figure at Covenant House and making an enormous difference for the good.

His work for homeless young people at Covenant House also opened his eyes to the great need for providing a positive alternative to those who were expecting a child but did not have the means and structure to support that decision. And from that recognition of need, Chris began the ministry which is today called Good Counsel Homes. Providing loving alternative for women who choose not to abort, but to bring forth their often-unintended children. His homes for Moms and their babies have been incredibly effective.

Recently, Senator Elizabeth Warren, a strident and bellicose supporter of abortion, condemned these alternatives to abortion. Her reasoning was both flawed and wildly unkind. Christopher Bell, one of the most decent Christians you're likely to meet wrote a reasoned response to the Senator from Massachusetts which was published by The Wall Street Journal. I offer it here as further evidence that pro-lifers not only seek to see the choice to abort ended but are also dedicated to offering life-giving love and support to both moms and their children. Please read this important piece by Chris Bell.

Thanks for your consideration.

In the Lord of Life and Love,

Msgr. Jim Lisante
Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes, Massapequa



Elizabeth Warren Smears Pro-Life Charities

By Christopher Bell

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Sen. Elizabeth Warren last week called for the federal government to “crack down” on crisis pregnancy centers and maternity homes such as Good Counsel, the one I founded in New Jersey in 1985. In the 37 years I’ve been working with homeless women, pregnant mothers and babies,

I’ve seen how the media smears the pro-life movement. They say we don’t care about women. They say we love children only before they’re born and, in Ms. Warren’s words, that we “mislead and deceive” women into having babies they don’t want. She may believe that, but it isn’t true.



At Good Counsel, like many similar organizations throughout the country, we take in any pregnant woman in need. Most come from broken or dysfunctional homes and have nowhere else to go. They are welcome to stay with us for a year or longer. During that time, we help them develop child-rearing skills. We also provide budgeting and vocational assistance, nutritional advice and tips for a healthy lifestyle. Many women choose to work or go back to school. Our staff babysits—free of charge—while new moms begin to build a résumé. We do everything we can to help connect women to resources and support.

It isn't easy. We have a curfew and a policy against alcohol and drug use. But every line is drawn with compassion and mercy.

Want to talk about deception? Many of the women who come to us have been told—by doctors, high-school counselors and social-service organizations—that abortion is their only option. They are told that having a baby means they'll never finish school and won't have a career. None of this is true, but I hear it every day.

The hidden reality is that no woman in the U.S. today has to raise a child she conceives. There are safe-haven laws in every state and territory allowing a woman to offer a child anonymously for adoption.

At Good Counsel, we also help women living with the pain of abortion. I know of no one in the pro-life movement who would condemn a woman for having an abortion. Half the women coming to our facility for help have already had at least one abortion. We don't throw stones. Many of our volunteers and counselors know the pain of abortion firsthand.

Want to talk about misleading? Nothing is more misleading than the claim that abortion is simply healthcare, that terminating a pregnancy is the key to a happy life free from unwanted burdens. My experience of talking with and helping more than 4,000 women at Good Counsel over almost four decades tells me that the pain of abortion can be devastating. Nobody should have to face it alone.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson* has brought renewed attention to the work done by maternity homes and crisis pregnancy centers. "Love them both" is not just a sign we carry at the March for Life every year. It's the key to ensuring that frightened and abandoned pregnant women understand that they have options other than abortion.

Ms. Warren is welcome to visit Good Counsel anytime she wants. I think she will see that we don't mislead or deceive anyone. We stick to the truth, delivered with compassion and mercy.

Mr. Bell is co-founder and president of Good Counsel Homes.