

To the Chairs and Members of the Senate and House Taxation Committees

in support of Senate Bill 96 and House Bill 2135

February 2, 2023

My name is Stacie, and I am a former client of Advice and Aid. I can't say enough great things about this pregnancy center. I found Advice and Aid while two months pregnant, and very confused about the decision whether to continue my pregnancy. I researched resources in my area that provided free ultrasounds when I stumbled upon Advice and Aid. To my surprise, Advice and Aid would offer me much more than just a free ultrasound, but support for my entire pregnancy. See, I later made the decision to continue on with my pregnancy soon after that free ultrasound. Before, I was scared and looking for an easy way out of having my child. After, I felt a sense of relief, comfort, and hope for the journey ahead.

During pregnancy, I struggled with the decision as to if I would be a good mom, knowing that I would be a single mom with a huge responsibility, and with very little support from those in my life. Although, I had made the decision to continue my pregnancy, there was also the choice of being a mother. I mention this because I received support in my decision, and I was able to meet with someone to ask questions about adoption. I also received a referral to an adoption agency, where I was able to meet and learn more about the process. I did eventually make the decision to be a mother to my child, which was one of the best decisions I have ever made!

As a client of Advice and Aid I was offered many resources for my pregnancy. I attended classes a few times a month and learned about preparing for birth, and how to care for my baby. While attending these classes I would accumulate points for my attendance, and completing assignments. I made sure to never miss a class, and to always take notes for my assignments. The points could be used in a small shop in the center in exchange for baby items. There was just about everything there that I would need to care for my baby, I'd just get a little at each time. Having this additional resource for baby items was such a blessing because I honestly had nothing in preparation for a baby, and I had very little funds to provide everything I needed.

Another amazing thing about Advice and Aid were the client advocates, I had someone that called to check on me, and see how I was doing at times. I felt very supported and was able to open up to someone I felt I could trust, which made my pregnancy less lonely. There was also a support line that I could call if I had needed something/someone and it was always answered with care.

Advice and Aid was heaven sent and so amazing to me during such a scary and vulnerable time in my life! While at the hospital and after birth, some of the advocates at Advice and Aid came to visit me and my baby, to congratulate me and bring gifts. I was blessed with a brand-new car seat, and pack and play. Two things that were lifesavers, and both of great quality. I was able to

keep the car seat for a while because it would grow with my baby. And the pack and play was awesome, it helped me tremendously while at home with baby.

After pregnancy this did not change the support I received. For two years after baby, you can attend ongoing classes at Advice and Aid. These classes are more geared towards bettering myself, goal setting, parenting, and meeting other new parents. It was so fun, I always looked forward to class. I learned about patient parenting, goal setting, saving and finances, and met friends. I was even a little sad when my baby turned two and we graduated out of the program.

All in all, I cannot imagine what my journey would have been without Advice and Aid. This organization was just what I needed in my time of need. I would recommend Advice and Aid over and over for anyone experiencing a pregnancy crisis and is seeking support and love.

Thank you for listening to my story. Please pass the bill out of committee so that Advice and Aid can help many more women like me.