

Representative Carpenter,

March 12, 2024.

My name is Ruth Tisdale, Executive Director at Advice & Aid Pregnancy Center in Overland Park and I am here in support of HB 2809 – the Every Mom Matters Act.

As a mother of 3 children, there were many times when my kids were sick during the night, and I didn't know what to do. As parents, we sometimes get nervous when our children are sick. We do our best to decide if this is an emergency or not. I remember calling the Advent Health nurses' hotline to get clarity on the situation. I kept the number on our refrigerator on a magnet. I was so glad this service was provided by the hospital for moments like these. The nurses that answered were always so kind and informative and helped my husband and I decide what to do next. I used that hotline number for questions related to my children's health. I have also used it for my own personal health.

While the internet has opened doors for people to have all sorts of information at their fingertips, at the same time it deprives us of human connection. Although there is a lot of information available to us through the internet, it is often difficult to discern what information is accurate and what is not. Women who face an unplanned pregnancy or who are on the verge of doing their own abortion at home need immediate access to accurate and unbiased medical information that they can be confident in. The Every Mom Matters Act would enable just that. It would provide a hotline/telehealth service for women during their crisis to connect with a medical professional who would be able to listen to their concerns, answer their questions and direct them to agencies throughout our state that can provide the tangible helps requested.

One thing I know we can agree on is that accurate education is important, especially when you are making a life altering decision. The EMMA Act would provide that type of information for women in this situation.

At Advice & Aid we regularly serve women not only from the KC Metro but from areas all over Kansas and beyond. We receive all sorts of calls, some asking for abortion, some related to getting medical care, some related to newborn care. Sometimes women are seeking help with needed items or legal help. Many times we can set an appointment for that woman at our center and walk her through her concerns. We may be able to provide the help ourselves or we might need to refer her to another agency that focuses on the specific needs she has.

In the KC Metro, we have multiple options for women to connect with agencies like Advice & Aid that have a hotline for women to call when they have a need regarding their unplanned pregnancy related concern. However, there are many women around our state that do not have access to that type of help any hour of the day. The EMMA Act would provide that much needed voice throughout our state for women who need to connect with a medical professional that can direct her to a pregnancy center, an adoption agency, or a doctor's office for additional help.

A recent call to our helpline came from a young woman seeking information about abortion including questions about the abortion pill. After discussing with her the importance of having a sonogram to learn more about her pregnancy, she accepted the invitation to come to our center. There, she and her partner received compassionate care and excellent medical services. She talked to a dedicated volunteer who was able to answer her questions. Her partner also had his concerns addressed when he met with

one of our male client advocates. Both had the opportunity to see their baby via sonogram. They even received information about adoption, to which they responded positively. This couple took the time to call, to get information, to investigate their options, and were open to receiving help that would make a way for them to have their child. That's the kind of people the EMMA act wants to reach all across the state of Kansas.

Thank you,

Ruth Tisdale