

To Madam Chair Representative Landwehr and members of the Health and Human Services Committee,
My name is Donna Swager and I am one of the founders and Board Member Emeritus of Hope's Place Pregnancy and Family Support Center in Goodland, Ks.

This testimony is provided for your committee hearing on February 16, 2024.

Western Kansas is not heavily populated but our service area is a 200 mile radius in every direction. There is no other pregnancy support center in that radius that provides the services that we provide. In the short time that we have been open, we have formed a large network of organizations whom we can call upon and who call upon us to help provide services not only for pregnancy support but also for needy child assistance, abused women support and suicide prevention. Our local hospital no longer delivers babies so the need to travel 30+ miles to see a prenatal Dr. is sometimes a challenge. We are instrumental in bridging that gap by helping with gas assistance or organizing transportation. We also provide free pregnancy tests and free ultrasound services.

We have a large inventory of material items such as maternity clothes, baby clothes, formula and food, burp clothes, bottles, books, cribs, swings, strollers and all other things mom and baby could need. We also have an inventory of furniture, beds of all sizes, bedding, toys, cookware, dishes, towels and most anything one would need to set up house. We provide toiletries, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, hairbrushes, toothbrushes/paste and sanitary products for parents and children.

We provide connections for Christian counseling, life coaching, marriage counseling, Natural Family Planning and adoption services in our building.

We offer classes in sexual integrity and parenting as well as family support to encourage sound Christian homes. We offer support for healing post abortion wounds.

We also provide financial management classes through our local K-State Extension Agent and through Financial Peace University. We request all of our clients take financial management classes to help mitigate a difficult financial situation. Our goal is to help them become financially stable, not to depend on us to provide for their needs.

We subscribe to Bright Course, a system of video classes through which we are able to maintain consistent communication with all of our clients to educate and advise on subjects that cover most of life's challenges. Each client is assigned a volunteer who follows each video with a discussion.

We serve the college population at NWTech college here in Goodland and Colby Community College just 40 miles east of us. We have a presence on both campuses and provide educational materials and presentations.

We provide a support system for mothers who have lost an infant through miscarriage, still birth or early child death through our quarterly Infant Loss support group and through one-on-one coaching.

We believe parenting is a joy and a privilege and we make every effort to help parents create happy, peaceful families. This is not an easy task. Many families experience financial hardships and just need a hand up to improve their situation. Some families have no idea how to create a happy, peaceful family. With the addition of a pregnancy, planned or unplanned the situation can seem impossible. Most of our post-abortive clients have stated that they "just didn't feel like they had a choice". Diapers and formula

are so expensive, daycare takes their entire paycheck and if they work more hours, they lose other assistance programs. The exorbitant costs of baby items should not be the reason to kill their child. We walk through the entire pregnancy with the mother and/or father to help create a stable home or an adoption plan and assist them for many years after the baby is born. No woman should feel obligated to destroy the life within her because she doesn't have the material, emotional or financial support to allow her child to live.

Our organization has operated exclusively on donations which means we run on a shoestring budget. With additional funding we can provide more services, more material assistance and expand ours of operation as well as pay a competitive salary to hire more client services personnel.

Hope's Place Pregnancy and Family support center enthusiastically supports the continuation of the program as presented in HB 2789.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Swager