

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 96 and House Bill 2135

Senate and House Taxation Committees

February 2, 2023

To the Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ruth Tisdale, I am the Executive Director at Advice & Aid Pregnancy Center in Overland Park, Kansas, and I am a proponent of this bill.

Since 1983, Advice & Aid has been encouraging women and families facing an unplanned pregnancy to choose life by serving them before during and after with Christ- like compassion. From its beginning, Advice & Aid has never charged a client for any service they have received at our center. I have been working in this organization for 18 years now, first as Director of client services and for the past 9 years as Executive Director. Over my 18 years of service, I have witnessed how God provides for the needs of the ministry and the needs of the clients. Everything we do, every diaper we give, every pregnancy test we perform, every paycheck we pay is because someone in our community has given of their personal treasure because they believe in the work we do. Thousands of women in our community have received help during their time of crisis because of Advice & Aid.

One thing I hear often from people I meet is that they had never heard of us, they say, “you are the best kept secret in our community.” Because we depend on individual donors to do all the services we provide like pregnancy testing, sonograms, STI/SDT testing and treatment, Early Pregnancy Consultation, the Abortion Pill Reversal, Post Abortion Assessment, education during and after pregnancy, case management, post abortion healing, sexual risk avoidance education, and help with baby items, our focus has been the services for clients; therefore, our ability to market ourselves throughout the years has been limited. If we had more dollars, we could do more marketing in our city so that more women could find us during their time of need and others would know we existed.

One of the women we served this last year is Kiara. She came to us after finding us online as she searched for help not knowing what she wanted to do now that she found herself pregnant with absolutely no support.

While at Advice & Aid, Kiara had the opportunity to see her little, tiny baby’s heart beating via sonogram. At that moment, she realized she was a mother. Yet Kiara had many challenges ahead and

wasn't sure how she could continue her pregnancy. In addition to the sonogram, Kiara was able to meet with a Registered Nurse and received additional information regarding what to expect during the pregnancy.

Following that appointment, she met with one of our licensed social workers who has been working with her even after her baby was born. Through our Care Management Program, we have been able to help multiple clients like Kiara with rent assistance, doctor bills, car repairs, legal issues, groceries, and other.

You see, we care about women, and children, born and unborn. We want families to thrive, and we are here to help them during a season of hard times. Advice & Aid not only helps mothers, but we are serving the fathers as well and encouraging men to be responsible for their children by equipping them as well. This year alone we served over 240 men.

In addition to making our name known in the community through marketing, additional funding through new donors or tax credits like this bill, would allow us to provide much needed assistance to families in areas that go beyond the pregnancy but are huge factors in their decision-making process. There are some programs as well that we would like to add yet they are in our dreams right now because reality means having more dollars.

Our work is mighty, and we do accomplish much with a small staff and volunteers, dedicated people who at the end of the day are working not to get wealthy but to make a difference. The same is true for our donors, they give because they want to make a difference in the lives of people in our community.

That's why we tell those we serve that what we offer is at no cost to them because someone else in our city cared enough to take care of their need.

I ask you to please pass the bill out of committee favorably.

Thank you.

Ruth Tisdale