

February 14, 2024

HOUSE BILL No. 2789 Proponent Testimony - Pregnancy Compassion Act

Submitted by: A Better Choice

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Madam Chair Representative Landwehr

House Health and Human Services Committee

The pregnancy compassion act is crucial to the health of the women and children we serve every day at A Better Choice (ABC), a pregnancy resource center located in Wichita. In 2023, ABC had 428 women reach out seeking abortion services. We were able to provide these women with services immediately including options education, pregnancy tests, sonograms, community referrals, and much more. The client advocates at A Better Choice sit with the women as they receive her results, hear her worries and fears, and help her process such a life-changing moment. The time spent with each client is so invaluable that over 100 women chose to parent their babies. We see hundreds more each year seeking pregnancy tests, referrals, and material assistance.

The number of our clients living in poverty and needing extra assistance grows every year. Our client advocates work one-on-one with them to set goals to move into safe housing, get medical care for themselves and their children, escape domestic violence, tackle drug or alcohol addiction, and improve their finances. ABC's case management is a direct response to those saying, "Pro-lifers only care about the baby and not the mother." The needs of our clients are increasing. In January of 2023 we had 120 requests for material assistance – we've had a 33% increase: 180 women requested help in the first month of 2024. Our shelves, which are usually full thanks to generous donations from churches, schools, and individuals, are now empty every couple of days. For the first time, we are having to keep up with the demand by supplementing items purchased out of our own funds. The items most requested include diapers, wipes, formula, and clothing.

We know we help protect women from the pains of abortion and the grief that comes from the loss of a child, but hearing the firsthand stories of the brave women who chose life for their children is insurmountable to our mission. The children in the following testimonies are just a few of the 85 confirmed lives saved from abortion.

ABC Client Testimonies:

“I had just gotten married. My husband was in a different country. I lost my job, my car broke down, and I had no housing, all of this happened at the same time. I was very scared and unsure about the pregnancy. I was afraid and had overwhelming emotions about not being able to provide. A Better Choice encouraged me and helped me get the resources I needed. I considered not keeping the baby but I’m glad I did. I love my son. Not everything is always perfectly aligned but God has been opening doors.”

“My reaction to my positive pregnancy test was not the happiest. My emotions were everywhere. I didn’t want any more children, and just having a miscarriage I didn’t want to be pregnant again. A Better Choice helped me by listening and understanding me in my emotions. They helped me to not make an emotional decision that I would later regret. They showed kindness, compassion, and care. My life has still been life, which means it comes with its highs and lows, but overall, I am grateful I chose to keep the life that was within me. He was the peace I needed! Who knows what my life would look like without him.”

“I was scared of my positive pregnancy test, mostly because I didn’t think I was ready to be a mom. I still had so much I wanted to do and goals I wanted to achieve. A Better Choice helped me get what my baby needed, stuff that I could not afford. Everything is so expensive now and babies need so much! I want to thank everyone at A Better Choice for being so nice and supportive. I appreciate not feeling judged for not being able to afford what my baby needs. I know that I will be and am a good mom.”

“My past includes hardships like domestic violence, homelessness, joblessness, and single parenthood, but I had made achievements like moving into a home, going back to college, and working again. I found out I was pregnant again and honestly couldn’t accept it at first. I did know deep down that I would be OK and God would keep me afloat. A Better Choice helped me by being able to provide food for my infant when I couldn’t afford formula and baby supplies. They also helped me get connected with other resources in the community that have helped me get back on my feet. The ladies at ABC made me feel like I was not alone and were here for me when I needed it.”

“I struggled with infertility for 7 years and out of the blue became pregnant with my miracle baby girl. A Better Choice provided so many resources and advice in the sweetest way. Without them I wouldn’t have the support I had. Thanks to everyone who gave me love and support. With my baby I am complete, closer to God, addiction free, and living the best and healthiest I’ve ever been.”

“I was a single mom and struggling with homelessness when I found out I was pregnant with twins. I was shocked. A Better Choice gave me resources and helped refer me to all the help in town that I could receive. It’s been amazing to see the two lives I brought into the world.”

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“My advocate at A Better Choice gave me confidence, reassurance, and the hope I needed to carry on with my pregnancy and plan out the next steps. I have another beautiful son, a positive relationship, a job that ABC encouraged me to apply for, and we are well.”

Closing Statement: The Pregnancy Compassion Act will directly benefit not just the women and children we serve every day, but generations of families to come. A simple package of diapers may not seem like much, but it means everything to a mom struggling to get by. We walk with women as they break generational curses including substance use, poverty, homelessness, and much more. The time and resources this bill allows us to give to the women we serve is life-changing, and we are grateful for your support.