

Dear Ms. Clark,

This note is to encourage you to oppose SB490. Our local crisis pregnancy center has been part of our community for over 20 years now and has made such a difference in our community. My daughter and I have both been clients even as happily married and what we who have volunteered at the center call "happily pregnant". The center's services and supports are available for all who come through their doors.

As a former volunteer receptionist at our local crisis pregnancy center, I've had the opportunity to see many clients come in because they had nowhere else to go and needed help with diapers, formula, clothing, a crib or carseat, parenting skills to avoid losing their children to DHS, housing, maybe even help talking to their parents. Many had no idea how to access services available to them like OHP, WIC, the local food banks and medical clinics, HUD, and the many other community services in place to help. Many of our clients had no doctor and didn't have a clue how to get one. They had no access to prenatal vitamins or the understanding of their importance during pregnancy.

Meeting these needs are just a few of services our local center started with. We have grown to include mentors, parenting classes that teach everything from making a baby blanket to balancing a checkbook to cooking healthy meals. We've had baby showers and bridal showers, we've seen young people choosing to wait and realizing their personal worth, we've seen addicts come clean, and families grow strong. Many of our clients have been able to finish school and get good jobs. So many of them have grown up in either very broken homes or the state systems with no consistent positive parenting examples, that they've become "family" at our center, often dropping in just to say "hi" or to show us how big their children are getting and to "share the latest news going on in their lives".

When our local center burned to the ground a couple years ago it wasn't just the staff and volunteers standing on the sidewalk crying and grieving the loss, there were several clients from over the years as well seeking comfort in the arms of the staff and each other. They said they felt like they'd lost their "home" and begged that we'd rebuild. Please don't take this away from them again.

One thing we know for sure is that we have to be honest with our clients because they can spot dishonesty and a phony a mile away. They know we don't refer for abortion and feel there are other options to unplanned pregnancies but they also know we won't stand in their way if that's their choice and that we'll welcome them back with open arms no matter their decisions without judging. Our center exists to help all who come through our doors and to make a positive impact in our community and the world around us.

Please give us the chance to continue this mission of love.

Sincerely,

Colette Kemper

Lebanon, OR