

To the members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Imani Allen and I am writing this in strong opposition to S.B. 835.

I reached out to Hope Pregnancy Center as a recommendation from a close relative of mine because my partner and I had been made aware that I was unexpectedly pregnant and we did not feel financially, emotionally, or educationally where we expected to be or wanted to be with the birth of our first child. Hope Pregnancy Center gave us the option of life and support. It was the alternative to making a permanent, less than desirable, decision based on temporary feelings of panic. They provided us with hope.

Going in, I knew that they would help me with the financial burden of having a child. They would set up a system which allowed us to earn points that we could use to purchase things that we may need for the baby and all I had to do was attend some parenting lessons and talk to the provided counselors.

I have learned that it is so much more than that. I can honestly say that I would not have made it through my pregnancy without the support of HPC. Joining the center at about 5 months pregnant, I was welcomed with open arms and provided a level of support and education that I did not expect. I've learned many things, from basic life skills, such as budgeting and managing credit, to parenting expectations, like breastfeeding benefits, infant milestones, discipline, family stability, etc.

Having been a parent for only a few weeks now, I have already faced situations that I have only been able to handle because of my knowledge acquired through the lessons I received at the center.

When I first arrived at the center I was extremely anxious, unprepared, and devastated by my situation and I was willing to try anything. Hope Pregnancy Center went far beyond expectation. I never imagined feeling as prepared and supported as they have allowed me to. They have worked around both mine and my partner's schedules and have given us a safe haven, a place to vent, ask questions, celebrate, and pray.

I have already recommended Hope Pregnancy Center to many of my loved ones as well as strangers whom I've come across that I felt may benefit from the services that the center offers. I even have a friend that is planning for her future pregnancies to be spent at Hope. Hope Pregnancy Center is making a huge difference, a positive difference

Thank you,
Imani Allen