

*LETTER FOR PREGNANCY CENTERS TO GIVE TO A PREGNANT WOMAN*

Dear Client,

If you have learned you are pregnant, you may be feeling confused, alone, and afraid to tell your parents or your boyfriend. Because you are faced with one of the most important decisions you may make in your life, you may have questions about what to do next.

We, at the pregnancy center, want to help you by giving you all the information about your options and tools so you can make the best decision. You are not alone. There is hope, and positive outcomes can arise from this situation. There are organizations ready to help you by providing resources, counseling, and even advise you of your legal rights.

One of these organizations is The Justice Foundation. We are working with The Justice Foundation to be sure that you are aware of your legal rights concerning your pregnancy. You may get a lot of advice and input about what decision you should make regarding your pregnancy, but it is ultimately your decision.

It is unlawful for your parents, relatives, or boyfriend to unduly pressure, force, or coerce you into having an abortion. In fact, to do so could subject them to potential criminal charges of child abuse or fetal homicide (killing a baby while still in the womb). Although *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* has overturned *Roe v. Wade*, abortion is still legal in many states. However, no one can legally force you to have an abortion in any state. Many states have serious criminal and civil penalties for forcing or coercing a woman to get an abortion. See e.g.; N.M. Stat. § 24-1-13.1 (giving the mother the sole right to consent to an abortion); La. Child. Code § art.603(2)(d) (criminalizing a forced abortion).

Some examples of statements of coercion or force include the following:

*"If you have this baby, I am kicking you out of my house"*

or

*"You are my child and you will do what I say."*

Your parents do not have to support your child financially; however, they are legally obligated to continue to support you if you are a minor. Additionally, you have the right to receive child support from the father of your child. And you may be eligible for financial assistance from the State and other groups. Attached is a letter that you can give to your parents or anyone else pressuring you to have an abortion which explains your legal rights.

Other young women who have been in a similar situation have found:

*"I am so glad that I was informed by my pregnancy center and The Justice Foundation that my parents couldn't force me into having an abortion."*

*"At first I was angry when my daughter told me she was pregnant and thought she should get an abortion. After having some time to cool off and read the parent letter, I told her that I would stand by whatever decision she made and she chose to parent her child."*

In one situation a pregnant 14-year old's father insisted that she have an abortion and even took her to the abortion facility. But she wanted to keep her baby, asserted her legal rights, and now she is the mother of a beautiful little girl.

If your parents, relatives, or boyfriend are trying to pressure or coerce you into having an abortion, please show them the attached letter. If you need additional help in understanding or asserting your legal rights, please contact the pregnancy center or call The Justice Foundation at 210-614-7157.

Sincerely,