



Dear Student,

If you have learned or suspect that you are pregnant, you may be feeling confused and alone. Perhaps you feel afraid to tell anyone, including your family or the baby's father. You are faced with an incredible juncture; a fork in the road. **You are not alone.** *There is hope!* There are resources and support that can help you embrace a positive, healthy outcome. You probably have a lot of questions. Our team at Standing With You (SWY) wants to empower you to make an informed decision. In fact, we have a small team that is dedicated to working with women just like you. Visit www.StandingWithYou.org for a list of state and national resources or email pregnancyresources@standingwithyou.org to contact SWY for direct support. SWY also partners with a number of supportive organizations that you should know about.

Because *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org.*, 142 S. Ct. 2228 (2022), has overturned *Roe v. Wade*, abortion is now illegal in many states. However, **even in states which allow voluntary abortion, all decisions about her pregnancy belong to the pregnant woman—even if she is a minor.** See e.g.; D.C. Code Mun. Regs. tit. 22-B § 600.7(a) (giving the mother the sole right of consent to an abortion); 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). The decision to have an abortion must be voluntary and fully informed.

First, there are Pregnancy Help Organizations nearby that provide **free** pregnancy tests & confidential counseling. They also typically provide adoption agency referrals & information, **free** ultrasounds, parenting education, maternity & infant supplies, medical referrals, and other helpful services that will support you and boost your confidence. To find a pregnancy center near you, visit optionline.org or call (800) 712-4357.

Second, you have free access to the experts on preventing coerced abortion at The Justice Foundation. As the mother of your child, you have extensive legal rights and The Justice Foundation can educate you on how to properly exercise these rights. Those around you may have a tendency to provide input on what you should do next. Keep in mind that it is illegal for anyone, **including your parents or the baby's father**, to force, coerce, or unduly pressure you into having an abortion. In fact, if someone were to do so, they could be subject to criminal or civil liability. Federal and state laws make it clear that any woman's decision (regardless of her age) to have an abortion must be voluntary and non-coerced. **No one can make this decision for you. You are strong.**

Some examples of statements of coercion or force include but are not limited to:

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

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

"You won't get a penny of child support out of me."

Your parents do not have to support your child financially; however, they are legally obligated to continue to support you until the age of 18. You may also be eligible for financial assistance from the State and other groups. On the standing with you website, you will find the "Dear Parent" letter that explains your legal rights to your parents. We have a similar "Dear Father" letter that explains your rights to the baby's father (as well as his obligations).



If you are in college on a scholarship or working, it is also illegal for a college or employer to discriminate against you on the basis of pregnancy. Many schools and colleges actually have programs to help pregnant and parenting students stay in school successfully. We can help ensure this happens.

But if a public employee participates in forcing, coercing or unduly pressuring you into having an abortion, they may be liable to you for damages. See *Arnold v. Bd. of Educ.*, 880 F.2d 305 (11th Cir. 1989). If your right to choose to have your baby is violated due to force, coercion, or undue pressure by a public employee (like a professor, coach, or advisor) you may be entitled to compensation under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

Oftentimes, when parents learn that their daughter is pregnant, their first reaction is anger and disappointment. However, once they have had a chance to cool off and receive and read the “Dear Parent” letter, many parents end up supporting their daughter’s decision to parent her child or place the child with an adoptive family.

If anyone, including your parents, relatives, boyfriend, baby’s father, college, or employer, is trying to force, coerce, or unduly pressure you into having an abortion, please show them this letter and reach out to The Justice Foundation at (210) 614-7157. We are here to help.

Sincerely,

Camille Cisneros
Standing With You Manager
[Standing With You](#)

Allan E. Parker
President, Attorney
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****Disclaimer: This letter is for general educational and information purposes and does not constitute specific legal advice. Situations and state laws vary and you should consult an attorney for specific legal advice.***