



March 5, 2024

Proponent testimony by Ruth Tisdale, Executive Director, Advice & Aid

Chair Senator Tyson and Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of SB 498. My name is Ruth Tisdale, Executive Director at Advice & Aid Pregnancy Center in Overland Park, KS.

I remember a movie years ago that had a line which became very popular and remains popular to this day. The movie is Jerry McGuire, and the quote is "show me the money". Money is an interesting thing in society. We all want it, we need it, we spend thousands of hours learning so we can make sure we will earn it, and so much more.

For those of us who follow the Christian faith, we are taught that God is the owner of all things. And, in Scripture God teaches that the love of money can be the root of all sorts of evil (1st Timothy 6:10). Yet Scriptures also teaches us to be generous and to use money to help others. There are about 2,000 references to money or possessions in the Bible. That's a lot.

For some reason, these are some of the thoughts that came to mind as I learned about SB 498. As Kansans we have an opportunity to use tax credits to do good in our communities for those who find themselves in an unplanned pregnancy. As a non-profit organization, Advice & Aid depends solely on the generosity of its contributors for all the services and programs we provide to those who walk through our doors. We have been doing so for over 40 years since the doors opened back in 1983! How? Because the people of Kansas love women, love babies, love families and want to see a state where women do not feel their only choice is to end the life of their pre-born child!

Just last year, 2023, Advice & Aid served 728 clients by providing pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, STI/STD testing and treatment, early pregnancy consultation, care management, baby prep classes, parenting classes, and after abortion help. Not one of these individuals had to pay a penny for any these services. And since 1983, we have not charged anyone who has received services at Advice & Aid.

By the end of 2023 we had performed 720 sonograms, 672 pregnancy tests, 450 STD/STI testing, worked with over 100 women through our care management program and had given away over \$119,000 in material aid. Again, at no cost to those we serve and because of the generosity of our donors. I know I already said that. I repeated it because I want you to grasp how awesome that is! None of the things provided are really free, we cover the cost of each service, yet we have never charged because we want women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy to have a chance to hear ALL their options so they can indeed make an informed decision.

We've provided these services for 40 years, as a non for profit, and on a limited budget. Since we are on a limited budget, we use volunteers to help us accomplish our mission. They donated over 10,000 hours in 2023!

I have been serving at Advice & Aid for almost 19 years. And throughout my years there, I have met many Kansans who sacrificially gave to this organization. I have received a \$6 check from someone who by her handwriting must have been very old with a note that said, "I hope this helps your budget" to larger gifts from people who can't be in our office yet want to join our work, so they do it with their money.

The tax credit would definitely help us as this might motivate more individuals to support work like ours. I am looking forward to sharing with them this information if you pass this bill!

Another reason I support this tax bill is the establishment of a child tax credit. Women who consider abortion list financial concerns as one of the top 3 reasons for making that choice. We must do all we can to help women see they are cared for and supported when they are in the midst of an unplanned pregnancy. We must not punish them, we must help them and our culture to see that motherhood is beautiful and that a child is not a problem but a respected member of society, born and pre-born. We are doing our part by providing many services and help to these ladies.

Individuals who have the desire to adopt or are in the midst of an adoption should also be helped. Adoption is a beautiful choice, for the mother who selflessly makes that parenting decision, as well for the ones that adopt that child. We should promote adoption and provide ways to make this option a viable option for those that are seeking to adopt. Adoption helps a woman who is unable to care for child and adoption gives a pre-born child an opportunity to life.

Lastly, I support this bill because of the opportunity for pregnancy centers to have a sales tax exemption. From saving at the grocery store when we have to purchase food for a client, to saving when we have a construction project, this sales tax exemption would be of great benefit to us. Every cent, every dollar that we can save makes a difference for organizations like ours. The more we can save in things like sales tax, the more we can continue to invest in the lives of the women, men and children we serve.

Thank you for considering my testimony today. I hope you vote in favor of Bill SB 498.

Ruth Tisdale

rtisdale@adviceandaid.com

913.399.1722