

## **Statement of Heidi Matzke**

### **Senate Committee on the Judiciary A Post-Roe America: The Legal Consequences of the *Dobbs* Decision**

**July 12, 2022**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Heidi Matzke, and I am executive director of the Alternatives Pregnancy Center in Sacramento, California.

I came into this role by a roundabout road that began in a very emotional place. A number of years ago, on the day my sister and I were supposed to leave for college, she showed up at my door and just ... collapsed. I said, "Well, what's your problem?" And she looked up and said, "I'm pregnant."

I still remember the fear in her eyes. I see that fear, almost every day, in the eyes of the women who come into our center. They need help. They need someone to talk to. They need hope.

I know, because my sister needed all those things. My family needed all those things – and we found them in a local pregnancy care center. And years later, because I wanted to give that same help and hope and support to others ... I became the director of a pregnancy center.

As an organization of mostly women serving women, the staff of our clinic offers our patients compassionate, holistic care – ministering in whatever gentle ways we can to their physical, emotional, and even spiritual needs.

So, it grieves me that, since the Supreme Court announced its *Dobbs* decision, a great deal of misinformation has been spread about who we are and what we do. Let me share with you the facts.

Our clinic is one of nearly 3,000 pregnancy care centers serving women across America. Each year, hundreds of thousands come to clinics like ours, looking for free medical care, emotional support, and practical resources that will enable them to carry their pregnancies to term.

Our clinic provides over \$1 million in free services each year to the women who come to us. We charge nothing. That means we never financially benefit from any choice a woman makes. We make no profit of any kind off the women who turn to us for help.

We offer pregnancy tests. Ultrasounds. Prenatal care up to 24 weeks. Well-woman visits. We test for and treat sexually transmitted diseases. We offer abortion pill reversals, abortion recovery counseling, and parenting classes.

If finances are a problem, we have diapers, wipes, and baby formula. Baby food, baby clothing, and baby supplies. If a woman needs a hotel room, we'll pay for that. It doesn't matter who she is, where she comes from, or her past.

At our center, all medical services are provided by a staff of licensed medical professionals, including doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, and medical assistants. They are deeply compassionate people, because most of them have experienced the effects of abortion themselves; our OB-GYN used to perform them.

When a woman comes in, so afraid of what an unplanned pregnancy will mean for her life, her ambitions, her relationships, we don't urge her to make a decision. We listen. We try to hear her heart. We offer professional services and emotional and spiritual support. Whether she chooses parenting, adoption, or abortion, we will continue to be there for her. For years, if necessary.

Many women chose abortion because they lack the resources and support they need to confidently choose to parent.

Over the last five years, America's pregnancy care centers have served nearly two million women who were faced with an unplanned pregnancy and wanted an alternative to abortion.

Yet, pregnancy care centers from coast to coast are being targeted for violent assaults of vandalism and hateful attacks online and in the media. Just last week, a man approached our care center armed with a machete.

We have been forced to hire 24-hour on-site security. We've had to reinforce doors and bulletproof walls and windows. We've painted the building with graffiti-proof coating. We've added cameras, armed our staff with pepper spray, and stopped running our mobile clinic because of threats of violence.

We have been forced to expend valuable resources—\$150,000—on these crucial safety measures.

What we do is worth the risk. Every community needs a place for women facing unplanned pregnancies who are seeking dependable medical resources in a safe, caring environment during one of the most difficult times of their lives.

“You are pregnant” – three of the most powerful words a woman will hear in her life. For some, the words bring incredible joy; for others, incredible fear. Both deserve support.

I thank you for the privilege of sharing with you a brief glimpse of the hope, service, and compassion our pregnancy center – and so many others across this great country – provide each day.

Thank you.