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State Representative: Duane Quam  
State Senator: David Senjem

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Judy and I'm 42 years old. I'm a college graduate and a successful CPA, currently working in the utility industry as a senior financial analyst. I'm also a single mother of two children (ages 18 and 16) with an annual income of approximately \$90,000. I grew up in a large Catholic family where religion was a big part of my life. I am now involved with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and religion continues to be a big part of my life.

I was a gestational surrogate two years ago at age 40. A very good friend of mine and her fiancé wanted to have a child together. She had two older children of her own, but he had no children. After complications from childbirth, she was unable to have any more children. They had a surrogate lined up, but by the time they had saved up the money to pay for the procedure, their surrogate developed medical issues that made her unable to carry a child. My friend was devastated. When listening to her talk about how excited she was to have this baby, I had thought about it and wondered if it was something I could do for someone. When she told me her surrogate wouldn't be able to carry the baby, I felt like I was being called to do this. I had given it a lot of thought and really felt like it was what I wanted to do. So I offered to be a surrogate and I have never regretted it for a moment. It brought my friend and I even closer, and I was able to bring a beautiful baby boy into this world that couldn't have been born any other way. He has brought so much joy to everyone in his life and he is so loved.

Other than having all my medical expenses and clothing expenses covered, I was not paid for being a surrogate. That wasn't my motivation. I simply wanted to do this for my friend, to give her this gift because I could. My previous pregnancies had been uncomplicated with very little sickness, and this one was no different. We went through the Mayo Clinic for everything, and they were very thorough and wonderful to work with. I met with doctors who explained the process very well. I answered a lot of questions about my background and my lifestyle and was also tested for STDs and other health issues multiple times. We all met with a counselor together as well as individually and talked about issues that we could encounter. Once she gave her ok, we were able to start the process. The entire process was a very positive experience. The doctors and nurses made sure I knew what was going on and that I was doing ok. When we did the embryo transfer, they placed two embryos. I was aware that both of them could have implanted and was prepared for that, but only one implanted. Throughout the pregnancy, I was counseled and given educational materials. Either one or both of the intended parents went to all of my doctor appointments with me. They were also both in the delivery room throughout labor and

delivery. I had to have an emergency C-section as the baby didn't feel like coming out when we wanted him to. I hadn't had one before, but even so I wouldn't have changed anything. The whole experience was very affirming and I am so glad I did it. And yes it was emotional, but bringing life into the world is a very emotional experience. Just knowing that I could give that gift to someone was an amazing feeling. And I never felt like he was my baby, more like I was taking care of him until he could come out and meet his parents. Seeing the joy on their faces was wonderful. I am blessed in that I still get to be a part of his life as his godmother, so I do get to see him and watch him grow. His mother and I are still very good friends.

After all I have told you, I want you to know the following about me:

I am not poor.

I am not uneducated.

I am not being repressed or taken advantage of by the "wealthy" to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help, and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status is irrelevant to me.

I was not motivated by money because I was not paid for my services. I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents.

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

I did not sell "my" baby to the intended parents; I *returned* the intended parents' baby to them after they temporarily placed him in my custody to gestate for them with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their child to them when I had completed my task.

I never viewed the child I gestated for the intended parents as "my child"; I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents' child, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequences or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once it was born. It was natural and simply the way it should be.

I have nothing negative to say about this experience. It is one I will cherish, and I hope that surrogacy continues to be a viable option for people who need it.

Sincerely,  
Judy Anderson

Wednesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Nicole Marie Anderson  
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Al Franken, US Senate  
Amy Klobuchar, US Senate

Jeremy Miller, MN Senate – 28  
Tim Walz, US House 1  
Gregory Davids, MN House 28B

Greetings,

My Name is Nicole and I was a gestational surrogate that recently delivered a healthy baby girl to her intended parents on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015. I am a wife and a mother of a 7-year-old boy. I am an educated person having completed a 2-year college degree as a Surgical Technologist and most recently I went back to school and finished a program as a Certified Aromatherapist. I work in our home taking care of our son and managing two of our businesses. We are property owners, which I serve as the landlord, and I run a small company creating, and selling aromatherapies, soaps, and shampoos. We live comfortably on our \$80,000 annual household income. I am not poor, or uneducated, or ever did I feel that I was taken advantage of by the “wealthy.”

Becoming a surrogate was something I knew I wanted to be apart of at the young age of 14. I remember vividly watching the news one day about this treatment that could help families have babies when it just wasn't possible for them to achieve on their own. As my life unfolded I always kept that wish to help someone in my mind. Fast forward to age 31, I am happily married with 1 child and our family is complete. I heard through one of my husband's good friends who develops websites for companies that help surrogates meet intended parents. This was my chance to investigate and see if surrogacy was something that was right for me. My husband and I spent about 8 months researching surrogacy, talking to experienced surrogates, surrogacy agencies, doctors, and discussing with my close family. This decision was not taken lightly. I am an independent woman who is capable of assessing the risks of a surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it was appropriate for me to take those risks. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

After thoughtful consideration I started the process of being pre-screened by a surrogacy agency. I talked with a surrogacy coordinator who inquired deeply about my life and educated me on what surrogacy entails and the possible risks. After being approved by my agency I was required to take an in-depth psychological evaluation of my husband

and of myself. I was required to take the MMPI test, get medical clearance from my physician, have a financial evaluation, and a background check. After all of this prudent and required testing and evaluations we were given our surrogacy contract. We had our own lawyer who went through our surrogacy contract line-by-line explaining the contractual language and answering questions my husband and I had. The lawyer representing us was experienced in surrogacy contracts, and helped guide us through and ensured we understood and agreed with every single item in the contract. After our surrogacy contract was signed I was also tested for diseases and had a physical evaluation from my intended parents' clinic.

My primary motivation for becoming a surrogate was to give someone the chance to be a mother or father. I was raised to always help if I was able. Getting approved to be a surrogate was a very happy moment for me as this is something that I have felt called to do for many years. After 3 embryo transfers I was finally pregnant with their child. I felt such relief for my intended parents as their journey to parenthood thus far was riddled with obstacles both financial and emotional. I got to know my intended parents and their families quite well through the 2 years it took to become pregnant with their child. The next 9 months of pregnancy was amazing! I felt so lucky and proud to be able to give this gift of life to these wonderful people. It was fun to share pictures of my growing belly and videotape their daughter's kicks being visible on my belly. Watching them get cautiously excited about their baby and knowing I helped made me very happy and content. My whole family welcomed our intended parents to our homes and we took care of them like they were our family. I had a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, and family taking great care of me when I delivered their sweet baby girl. I felt just as I thought I would when I delivered her. I felt love for her as if she was my best friend's baby. I never once perceived this baby to be mine in any way. I couldn't wait to see this baby in her parent's arms. All the work we all did to get this miracle here was the best thing I've ever done in my life. I was able to change a lot of people's lives for the better. 8 months since delivering I still feel very proud of myself and so glad I made the decision to become a surrogate.

I support recognizing commercial gestational surrogacy contracts in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Nicole Anderson

July 15, 2016

Carol Awe  
13430 128<sup>th</sup> st  
Chippewa Falls WI 54729

To Whom it May Concern:

I was a surrogate 6 years ago and a beautiful girl was born and handed to her parents on 2/6/11. Her parents had tried every procedure under the sun to get pregnant and every time it turned to disappointment. They turned to surrogacy as a last resort to become parents.

You may wonder why did you want to be a surrogate? I wanted to be a surrogate after reading an article in a magazine that caught my attention, but the most important reason is that my father-in-law received a kidney transplant. With out this life changing gift he would not have met his grandsons, William & Ben, my sons. In his last year at the nursing home William and Ben would light up his eyes and change his whole attitude. These little boys meant the world to him. Sadly Grandpa passed away when the boys were 5 & 3 years of age. Those years of having his grandsons in his life were priceless.

Seeing first hand what an impact kids can have on grandparents I choose to check into becoming a surrogate. My pregnancies were fairly easy and uncomplicated so I thought I am going to check into this. I found an agency while doing a search on the internet and filled out the questionnaire. They responded and we started the process. If you think anyone can be a surrogate guess again. You meet with a psychologists and take a 500 question psych test, Are you crazy enough to do this? Just kidding!. You go through medical testing. You can not be on any form of government assistance, and be financial stable. My husband's and my annual income is \$84,000.00. So the ideal of doing this for the money think again as we own our house and build a cabin on 44 acres of woods. We are financially stable.

My boys are my world and I can't imagine life without them. They change your life for good reasons and you will find yourself doing things that you didn't think you ever would. I was a soccer coach last year. I have never played soccer other than gym class.

My husband was the most supportive person through this journey. Helping me through the pregnancy and helping with the boys. I couldn't have done this without his support.

Being a surrogate is about giving. Life is about giving, what can I give in life to make a difference in someone else's life? I think being a surrogate is one accomplishment and a rewarding experience that no one can beat!

Please take in account all points in my letter before you make a decision in this case. Your decision will affect many.

Carol Awe  
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July 15, 2016

Hi, my name is Marie Bakke, I am 35 years old. I am originally from South Dakota but moved to Minnesota in 2006 when I married my husband. We had our first child together in 2007 & our second one in 2009. We bought our home in 2009 and started our Journey to become a surrogate in 2010. I have a son from a previous relationship and my step son is 17.

For as long as I can remember I have always known that I would carry a child for another couple. I knew this before I even had my own kids. Some people dream of being a doctor, teacher or even a senator! But I knew I would be a Surrogate. One of the first questions I asked my then boyfriend, now husband, was if he would be ok with me being a surrogate. Lucky for him he said YES! We would not be married today if he had said no.

About a year after my daughter was born, I met a fellow surrogate from South Dakota who was very gracious in answering my hundreds of questions I asked her. I went home and spoke with my husband and we decided that it was time to begin our Journey as a Gestational Surrogate.

After about 3 months of research, I chose an agency, Circle Surrogacy out of Boston, MA. Following extensive screening, both mentally and physically, by my agency, I was ready to be matched with a couple. A process that was overseen by a team of lawyers at the agency. They take in to account, demographics, religious beliefs, termination views, and marital preferences (gay, straight, single, married, male, or female), to name a few.

I was 28 at the time I applied to be a surrogate and I was working in a nursing home as a Certified Nursing Aide. I later took a position as a Home Health Aide in my local Home Care Agency. I worked there for 5 years before I left to take a position in public assistance where I am currently the Energy Assistance Program Assistant for a five county area where I bring home approximately \$30k/year. My husband has been self-employed for 18 years and brings home about \$60k/year. My extended family has been very supportive throughout the years as well.

The online application to become a surrogate with my agency took about 2 hours to complete. After that I was subjected to a 2 hour phone conversation with a liaison for the agency. I was asked all sorts of questions, as was my husband. I was then asked to send in my ENTIRE medical history as far back as my first pregnancy in 2000! It was then reviewed by the agency medical staff and was determined that I was physically fit enough to withstand another pregnancy. Once medically cleared on paper, I had to complete a 2 hour long MMPI, which is a test to measure my mental stability. After passing that, I had to fly to Connecticut where the Reproductive clinic we would be using was located. I was given an ultrasound of my uterus and had some blood drawn to screen for drugs, HIV and other health concerns, to name a few. I repeated this process with all 3 of my Journeys and have just started the process again, which will be a sibling journey for my 3<sup>rd</sup> surrogate baby, transfer is set for November 2016.

Throughout every Journey I have had, 3 total, I have always felt as though I was just the carrier. I never felt that the baby should be mine or felt an attachment to it like I did with my own children. It felt like a

love for a niece or a nephew. The most amazing and almost surreal moment for me was when the baby was born and placed in the new parents' arms, and boy, did the tears of joy flow. To know the extent of the hoops the IP's had to jump through, over and under to get this amazing little miracle and to finally see them holding the baby was absolutely breathtaking. I will never forget those 3 moments I was lucky enough to be a part of. I always thought it was funny when people congratulated me on the birth, because it was never my child. I was just the stork. I have never regretted handing the baby back to the parents, the only thing my surrogate families have taken from me and my family is a piece of our hearts. They are like family to us now and always will be.

My kids now truly understand the meaning of equality and unconditional love. Not to mention, how much their mom loves chocolate and cupcakes while pregnant. They love correcting people when asked if they are excited about becoming a big sibling again. You can practically hear the Pride dripping from their words as they explain that I am a surrogate and that the baby will go back to its parents.

I firmly believe that this process should be regulated to be fair to everyone and to make sure that those who believe they are strong enough to handle it, really are. It is a very long, hard process to go thru. It's emotionally and physically taxing. It is definitely a rollercoaster but I firmly believe it has made me a stronger person, wife and mother. I do not believe that it should be deemed as illegal. By labeling it as Illegal, its basically saying there was something wrong with the way the babies already created by this process, were brought to this earth. You will be driving business away from Minnesota as well. Agencies, Clinics, Doctors, Hospitals, IP's coming from out of town, etc. It takes a village, and villages spend money. So yes, make it illegal for someone not using the proper channels, lawyers, clinics, and resources. But please don't punish the rest of us who did everything right. Who brought joy and love to couples desperately seeking the ultimate gift, LIFE.

Sincerely,

Marie Bakke  
Proud Wife, Mom and Surrogate

Jennifer Beres  
3420 Bailey Lane  
Anoka, MN 55303  
(763)-443-0244

Abigail Whelan (R)  
Jim Abelor (R)  
Tom Emmer (R)  
Amy Klobuchar (DFL)  
Al Franken (DFL)

July 18, 2016

My name is Jen Beres and I am 34 years old. My husband, Trevor, and I have 2 loving and adorable children (ages 6 and 3). I have an undergrad degree in Elementary Education (grades K-6) and Science (grades 5-8), from the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth (2004) and a Post-Baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education from the University of MN-Duluth (2007). I am currently a tenured, full-time ECSE (Early Childhood Special Education) teacher in the Elk River School District. In addition to being a wife, mother, and teacher, I am also a volleyball coach (MN Select: Nov-June and Anoka HS: Aug-Nov). We are members of St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Anoka, MN. My husband has a degree in Secondary Education from UMD and was a member of the United States Marine Corps Reserve (has an honorable discharge). In addition to working full time this past year in a behavior management position in the Cambridge/Isanti/St. Francis districts, he coached and reffed volleyball. This summer while I teach part time, he is working full time at the Daytona Golf Club and part time with the MN Twins as a member of the tarp crew. We worked hard to have the funds available to purchase our house and cars, provide for our family, pay off school loans, pay for our own activities, and give back to others when we are able.

Think about this question for a moment: "How many people do you know that would make amazing parents, possibly better than you, but aren't able to conceive?" I worked with a teacher in the past, that did everything she possibly could to get pregnant, including multiple rounds of IVF, but it never took. It never took. At that time, I wasn't in a position to be a surrogate for her because I hadn't had my own children yet. At that time, I didn't know how my body would react to pregnancy. At that time, I didn't know how much her life affected my decision to research and move forward with becoming a surrogate when the time was right. I couldn't do this for her, but I did it in honor of her and her husband who would make amazing parents. Being a surrogate was my way of paying it forward, my way of sharing my love, sharing my ability to give the gift of life with another family who wanted to be biologically related to their own child. Being a surrogate taught my children what it means to give of the self. I hope that my own kids grow up in a world where actions speak louder of peace, hope, and love than words, and by being a surrogate, I was able to demonstrate how to help others make their dreams come true. I hope that



my kids can see that helping others, even one family at a time, really can make a positive, life-changing difference.

In July of 2014, at the age of 32, I decided to initiate my own investigations about the options of becoming a surrogate. I researched online, talked to family and friends, called an agency to get more facts and ask questions, and based on this research, start an application. I learned that in addition to filling out a multi-page application for what kind of surrogacy I was looking for, who I was willing to be a surrogate for, and having my current doctor sign a medical release on my behalf, my husband and I both would be participating in a psychological evaluation. After filling out many forms, asking more questions, and having my medical history thoroughly dissected, I was cleared to try to become a surrogate. My first matching call was in October of 2014 (3 months after starting the process). The Intended Parents flew out to meet us in November, prior to signing contracts. We read, revised, and reread contracts that stated everything both sides needed to agree upon before moving forward with attempting medications and a surrogate-pregnancy. Details included everything from the risks of pregnancy, the payments, the timeline, and the scary “what-if’s”. It included rights of the surrogates as well as the rights of the intended parents. The contracts were reviewed by separate lawyers in December, prior to another medical screening appointment that was in Connecticut. 7 months after I made the first phone call, I started medications to prepare my body for the embryo transfer (February) and then the actual transfer occurred in March of 2015. I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl in November of 2015 and made the parents’ wishes of being biologically related to their child come true. I watched as they held their baby girl with a gentle grace and how they looked lovingly into each other’s eyes and knew that we had done an amazing thing with the power of science, technology, and God’s grace to bring this baby girl into the world together.

The process of becoming a surrogate taught me more about the struggles that couples go through when choosing and making an educated decision to become pregnant. Becoming a gestational surrogate was my way of helping their dreams come true. My experience of becoming a surrogate has been amazing and surreal. I was able to educate many people about the different aspects of surrogacy including the application, screening, matching with intended parents, IVF medications, post-transfer appointments, etc. I have been asked more times than I can count if I was worried about feeling connected to the child I was carrying, but the truth was that I knew exactly what I was getting into. I was the carrier. The child I had was not related to me in any way and my connections to the child were of protecting the child until birth so that the true parents could hold the child of their dreams in their arms.

As I write this, the child I gave birth to as a surrogate is now almost 8 months old. She is happy and thriving with her parents. I look forward to updates as a friend of the family would, but the child is in no way mine. That is the job of a surrogate. I knew that I had done an amazing thing when the parents allowed me to hold their child in my arms after birth. I am lucky that in my case, the intended parents have

honored me by calling me “auntie Jen” for this child. I am someone who cares about their family as a whole, but the decisions about her name and how she is raised are up to the parents that I chose to do this surrogacy for.

I am honored to share my story in hopes that those who are unaware or uneducated in the topic of surrogacy will realize that surrogacy needs to be an option, as it is the only option for some to have children of their own. Let families have the option to choose what is best for them. Please protect the right to choose in Minnesota.

Thank you.

Jen Beres

**PURPOSE & INTRODUCTION**

In gestational surrogacy, an embryo is created *in vitro* using an intended father's sperm and an ovum from an egg donor. The embryo is then transferred to the uterus of a different woman (a "surrogate") who has agreed to carry the baby through pregnancy.

This is the first study to explore:

- Motivations and decision-making processes of gestational surrogates who are willing to work with gay male prospective parents.
  - Personality differences between these surrogates and an age-matched sample of non-surrogate women.
- Prior psychological research in this area focused only on surrogates who worked with heterosexual couples. Also, previous investigators used only the MMPI-2 clinical scales whereas we used MMPI-2 scales assessing broader personality traits.

**METHOD**

We obtained archival assessment interview data and MMPI-2 scores on a sample of 79 gestational surrogates who worked with gay men. We also received comparison archival data (given to us by MMPI-2 Corporation) on 100 women matched for age (22-37 years old).

The surrogate sample included women from an agency in California that works with surrogates nationwide. Among the agency's selection criteria, a surrogate must already have at least one child of her own and show no obvious evidence of psychopathology in interviews or on the MMPI-2 clinical scales.

For the present study, data were selected only from surrogates who indicated they were willing to help gay men become parents. They were paid approximately \$25,000 for surrogacy.

The sample was predominantly Caucasian (75%), 51% committed relationship, and 25% were single. Surrogates had an average of 1.97 children of their own.

A possible limitation is this study's reliance on only one agency's archival data about surrogates. However, other surrogacy agencies have very similar selection procedures (assessment interviews and screening based on MMPI-2 clinical scales).

Aaron W. Anderson<sup>1</sup>, Kim Bergman<sup>2</sup>, Robert-Jay Green<sup>1</sup>, & Seth T. Pardo<sup>1</sup>  
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**Measures**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW:** An individual interview was conducted with each prospective surrogate as part of her application process to become a surrogate. Responses to interview questions were written down by the interviewer at the surrogacy agency.

The data analyzed in the current study were in response to the question: *Tell me how you reached your decision to become a surrogate?* Responses to this question were coded by trained research assistants to discern major themes in surrogates' motivations and decision-making processes.

- MINNESOTA MULTIPHASIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY:** The MMPI-2 assesses psychiatric symptoms through its clinical scales as well as assessing more general personality characteristics. Because women with elevated scores on the clinical scales would already have been screened out as unsuitable for surrogacy by the agency, we chose to examine the following broader personality scales:
- **Ego Strength (Es):** Adaptability, resiliency, personal resourcefulness, effective functioning, ability to cope with stress and recover from problems.
  - **Disconstraint (DISC):** Low scorers tend to be self-controlled and not impulsive, have high tolerance for boredom, tend to follow rules and laws, and may respond better to structured treatment approaches.
  - **Social Responsibility (Scl):** How a person sees themselves, and how they are seen by others as dependable and trustworthy, and having integrity and a sense of responsibility to the group.
  - **Negative Emotionality/Neuroticism (NEGE):** A broad affective disposition to experience negative emotions, especially anxiety and nervousness.
  - **Introversion/Low Positive Emotionality (INTRE):** Low scorers are persons who have the capacity to experience joy and pleasure, are quite sociable, and have lots of energy.
  - **Dominance (Do):** How a person sees themselves and are seen by others as self-secure, confident, straightforward manner, optimistic, resourceful, efficient, realistic, and achievement oriented.

Table 1.

**Motivational & Decision-Making Themes**

Theme	Percent of Surrogates Who Mentioned this Theme
Thought About Being a Surrogate for a While	58.2%
Own Family is Complete	57.0%
Want to Give or Help Others	55.7%
Like Being Pregnant	43.0%
Empathy Regarding Others' Infertility	38.0%
Closeness to Someone with Fertility Problems	30.4%
Perceived Ability & Confidence	26.6%
Researched Surrogacy Before	26.6%
Talked to Friends & Family about Surrogacy	24.1%
Time is Right To Become a Surrogate	24.1%
Importance of Having Children	22.8%
Saw Surrogacy Ads on Internet/TV/Media	22.8%
Knows A Surrogate	15.2%
Considered Being an Egg Donor or Foster Parent	13.9%
Previous Experience Similar to Surrogacy	11.4%
See Surrogacy as a Good Fit for Them	10.1%
Receive Financial Support	7.5%

**RESULTS**

Analyses of the interview data revealed a wide range of motivations and decision-making processes (see Table 1). Motivations that were most frequently expressed were: "Want to give or help others" (56%); "Like being pregnant" (43%); and "Empathy regarding others' infertility" (38%). Decision-making processes most frequently described were: "Thought about being a surrogate for a while" (58%), "Own family is complete" (57%), "Perceived ability and confidence" (27%), and "Researched Surrogacy before" (27%).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Surrogates scored in the more prosocial/adaptive direction on five of the six MMPI-2 scales (see Table 2). Especially strong findings were that surrogates scored higher than the control group women on ego strength and social responsibility, and lower on negative emotionality/neuroticism.

These results suggest that gestational surrogates who are willing and selected to work with prospective gay fathers are higher functioning psychologically than a comparison group of women their same age. These surrogates are more resilient, less predisposed to experience negative emotions, and higher in social responsibility. Their primary motivations include desire to help others and enjoyment of pregnancy itself. Their decisions involve a process of thinking about and researching surrogacy over time, contemplating their own ability to handle it well, and concluding that the timing is right because they already have their own children.

Table 2. Surrogate vs. Non-Surrogate Comparisons on MMPI-2 Scales

Variable	N	Surrogate Mean (SD)	Control Grp Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	t	df
Ego Strength (Es)	79	59.47 (5.88)	50.74 (9.48)	8.73	13.19 **	78
Disconstraint (DISC)	79	47.54 (8.89)	52.44 (10.59)	-4.89 **	-4.89 **	78
Social Responsibility (Scl)	79	58.39 (7.34)	49.80 (9.49)	8.59	10.41 **	78
Negative Emotionality/Neuroticism (NEGE)	79	38.14 (5.98)	50.10 (10.08)	-11.96	-17.78 **	78
Introversion/Low Positive Emotionality (INTRE)	79	44.14 (6.28)	49.73 (9.82)	-5.58	-7.89 **	78
Dominance (Do)	79	50.52 (6.23)	49.70 (9.48)	.89	1.17	78

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$

## Surrogacy: outcomes for surrogate mothers, children and the resulting families—a systematic review

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### Abstract

**BACKGROUND** Surrogacy is a highly debated method mainly used for treating women with infertility caused by uterine factors. This systematic review summarizes current levels of knowledge of the obstetric, medical and psychological outcomes for the surrogate mothers, the intended parents and children born as a result of surrogacy.

**METHODS** PubMed, Cochrane and Embase databases up to February 2015 were searched. Cohort studies and case series were included. Original studies published in English and the Scandinavian languages were included. In case of double publications, the latest study was included. Abstracts only and case reports were excluded. Studies with a control group and case series (more than three cases) were included. Cohort studies, but not case series, were assessed for methodological quality, in terms of risk of bias. We examined a variety of main outcomes for the surrogate mothers, children and intended mothers, including obstetric outcome, relationship between surrogate mother and intended couple, surrogate's experiences after relinquishing the child, preterm birth, low birthweight, birth defects, perinatal mortality, child psychological development, parent-child relationship, and disclosure to the child.

**RESULTS** The search returned 1795 articles of which 55 met the inclusion criteria. The medical outcome for the children was satisfactory and comparable to previous results for children conceived after fresh IVF and oocyte donation. The rate of multiple pregnancies was 2.6–75.0%. Preterm birth rate in singletons varied between 0 and 11.5% and low birthweight occurred in between 0 and 11.1% of cases. At the age of 10 years there were no major psychological differences between children born after surrogacy and children born after other types of assisted reproductive technology (ART) or after natural conception. The obstetric outcomes for the surrogate mothers were mainly reported from case series. Hypertensive disorders in pregnancy were reported in between 3.2 and 10% of cases and placenta praevia/placental abruption in 4.9%. Cases with hysterectomies have also been reported. Most surrogate mothers scored within the normal range on personality tests. Most psychosocial variables were satisfactory, although difficulties related to handing over the child did occur. The psychological well-being of children whose mother had been a surrogate mother between 5 and 15 years earlier was found to be good. No major differences in psychological state were found between intended mothers, mothers who conceived after other types of ART and mothers whose pregnancies were the result of natural conception.

**CONCLUSIONS** Most studies reporting on surrogacy have serious methodological limitations. According to these studies, most surrogacy

arrangements are successfully implemented and most surrogate mothers are well-motivated and have little difficulty separating from the children born as a result of the arrangement. The perinatal outcome of the children is comparable to standard IVF and oocyte donation and there is no evidence of harm to the children born as a result of surrogacy. However, these conclusions should be interpreted with caution. To date, there are no studies on children born after cross-border surrogacy or growing up with gay fathers.

**Key words** altruistic assisted reproduction birthweight child development gestational intended parent obstetric complication prematurity relinquish surrogacy

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July, 28, 20162

Senators: Bill Ingebrigtsen, Amy Klobuchar, and Al Franken  
Representatives: Mary Franson and Collin Peterson

Dear Senators and Representatives:

I am writing this letter to express my strong opposition to the misrepresentation that is being given to you regarding surrogacy and gestational carriers. I had the privilege and honor to be a gestational carrier for my sister. My sister had her uterus removed so was not able to conceive on her own. As a mom of three, I just can't imagine knowing that I could never have a child so I offered to carry one for her and her husband. We had a great experience which included a wonderful and caring medical team, psychologists and lawyer to be sure everything was done legally and ethically.

Much of the information I'm hearing surrounding the "horrors" of surrogacy, seem absolutely ridiculous to me. I have a Master's degree and am at a senior level for the company I work for. This choice was made with much love and support of our many family members and friends. My own children got to enjoy this experience and learned compassion, caring, and loving another. It really saddens me that religious organizations would oppose and speak the evils of surrogacy. We are fortunate to belong to a church who not only accepted this, but as Christians understand that this is the gift of life we are able to give another.

Surrogacy and being a gestational carrier is not something that should be taken lightly. I believe that in Minnesota we have proper laws and regulations set up. I urge you to please research the benefits and goals of being able to give life to another via surrogacy. This was a positive, beautiful time for my family, that shouldn't be taken away from others. If we did not have this option, we would have missed out on my amazing, healthy nephew that I carried for 9 months.

Sincerely,

Tara Bladow

**TO: The Legislative Commission on Surrogacy**

**FR: Amy Carstensen**  
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***“Surrogacy creates countless, unbelievable, beautiful love stories...” – Anonymous***

My name is Amy Carstensen. I am 44 years old and I live in Rochester, MN. As a college graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology/Psychology, I worked in Child Protective Services for 3 years. When I earned my Master of Science degree in Counseling, I became a school counselor and am proud to start my 18<sup>th</sup> year in education this fall. I consider myself to be both well-educated and experienced in working with children and families.

I am also a mother of 4 children. Oh, if I had the time to tell you their stories... the joys and challenges of Down syndrome, foster care, adoption, grief and loss and of course, the tales of typical child development as well. I consider myself to be well-educated and experienced in working with my own children and my own family too.

In November, 2007, I decided to be a gestational surrogate. I was at work on a late Friday afternoon... not wanting to start another task, not wanting to join colleagues for happy hour and not quite wanting to pick up my children at daycare yet. It came to me that I should create a bucket list and although I had never thought of surrogacy before, it was one of the 9 life goals I set for myself that day.

Fast forward through application, psychological assessment and support from the staff at the International Assisted Reproduction Center IARC... through the process to match me with intended parents. Then, fast forward through the actual implantation of the embryo to the birth of sweet Sarah in March, 2009. From start to finish, my experience as a gestational surrogate for Sarah and her intended parents was quite... perfect.

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Unfortunately, there are stories of surrogates who feel strongly that their babies were taken from them. Although my heart aches for surrogates who feel victimized, I have to wonder about their mindsets. A successful surrogate needs a mindset of logical, critical thought rather than impressionable, heartfelt emotion. During my surrogacy, people often said, “No way, I could never do that. I don’t think I could ever, ever give up the baby. “ My reply was always, “It really won’t be a problem... this is not my baby at all... I’m just helping someone become a mom” and I meant every. single. word. From bucket list to birth, Sarah was never my baby to keep. I strongly believe that is the view of the majority of surrogates; it is the reason we became surrogates in the first place.

In addition to a solid mindset, a successful surrogate needs strong psychological assessments and service. Although I knew I was a good fit for surrogacy, I had serious concerns that my childhood abuse, my adolescent eating disorder or my grief surrounding my divorce would preclude me. But, because of IARC's thorough screening process, my psychological health was explored and supported and thankfully, in spite of the resilience my life has required, or perhaps because of it, I was able to be an emotionally healthy surrogate.

***Legislators, in response to the stories of surrogates who feel like victims... do not abolish this miraculous, life-changing process but, rather, ensure that Minnesota agencies require the critical psychological services and support that each surrogate needs, in an attempt to prevent the horror stories you will likely hear today.***

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Unfortunately, there are concerns that women who lack education or financial resources may be particularly vulnerable to surrogacy. That has not been my experience and that has not been the experience of those around me. I am educated and so were the surrogates I met on my journey. Even if other surrogates didn't have the same level of formal education I had, I know that they were fully educated about all aspects specific to surrogacy – all the inherent joys and all the possible risks. Regarding finances, we all seemed fairly similar, afloat in the financial comfortability of the middle class. Now, it is true that the financial compensation was helpful to me and to my family but, it is also true that I would have done it for free and quite honestly, each surrogate I met had the same authentic and transparent desire to help create families. I did not have a pressing financial need to do surrogacy to put food on my kitchen table and neither did they.

***Legislators, in response to the stories of surrogates who seem intellectually or financially vulnerable... do not abolish this miraculous, life-changing process but, rather, ensure that Minnesota agencies provide detailed education surrounding surrogacy and determine that surrogates can adequately provide for their own basic needs and those of their children, without the supplemental income from surrogacy, before approval.***

I thank you so much for your service.

I thank you so much for listening and learning before taking action.

Indeed, *“surrogacy creates countless, unbelievable, beautiful love stories...”*

Sincerely,

Amy Carstensen  
Gestational Surrogate  
2009



Marissa Star Chance  
6671 Palamino Circle  
Yorba Linda, Ca 92886

State of California  
State Representative – Edward R. Royce  
State Senators – Barbara Boxer & Diane Feinstein

To whom it may concern,

7/12/2016

My decision to be a surrogate started when I was 18 years old. At that time it was just a thought that was sparked by the idea of gestational surrogacy. It touched my soul and I knew one day after having my own children I would be a surrogate. My intuition grew stronger after each of my daughters was born. I knew in my heart it was something I had to do, I had to provide parents with the feeling of being able to have a child of their own, biologically.

18 years later after having 2 daughters I knew I was done with my own and embarked on making my dream become reality. In January of 2016 I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl and handed her off to her parents – 2 wonderful Daddies. From the moment I met her parents I knew they were going to be wonderful parents. We developed a great relationship and essentially became family. When I gave birth to their sweet baby girl, it was the most gratifying feeling I have ever experienced, other than giving birth to me own girls. I was emotionally taken aback by the love and joy I felt seeing their love and joy. Definitely one of the greatest feelings in my life, knowing I was able to help them create their family. There was NEVER a point in this journey where I felt the want or need to keep their baby. She was never my baby to begin with; I was just her caretaker and provider for 9 months.

During the whole process as a surrogate I was asked multiple times if I were doing it for the money. I would laugh each time, and sometimes be insulted. Surrogacy is not something that money can make worthwhile; I believe it comes from the heart. I am college graduate, have a full time job as a Human Resources/Office Manager, and make over 70k+ a year. My husband also works full time as an HVACR technician and makes 60K+ a year. We did not and do not need the compensation for our family of 4.

Sincerely,

Marissa S. Chance  
Proud Surrogate

Christine M. Crincoli, Ph.D  
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[crincoli@hotmail.com](mailto:crincoli@hotmail.com)  
Joe Hoppe-MN House  
Julianne Ortman-MN Senate

July 13, 2016

To whom it may concern:

I am a 36-year old, married, woman and mom to three toddlers aged four and under. I have a dual PhD in pharmacology and toxicology and make over six-figures before bonuses. I am a toxicologist for a major ingredient supplier in the Twin Cities. My husband is a stay-at-home dad to our kids and has been since moving to Minnesota in 2012. We are not currently affiliated with any religion; however, I was raised Catholic.

I am writing this letter of support today for all the people who have to turn to surrogacy to fulfill their dreams of having a child. I would like to provide my recent experience.

Our family was completed in October of 2014. I distinctly remember the date I first mentioned to my husband my wishes to become a gestational carrier (GC). It was the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, and we were lying in bed, feeling accomplished for having just put three kids to sleep. After I said the words "What do you think about me being a gestational carrier?" to my husband, he rolled over and said "I think that would be an incredibly selfless thing to do". So I Googled "gestational carrier" on my phone and found a listing of agencies. I wasn't sure of what the process entailed, but I clicked on the first hit and filled out a form. I didn't think anything of it until the next day when I received a phone call from the agency. It was a woman who had also been a carrier after having undergone in-vitro fertilization (IVF) herself to have her own children. We talked for over an hour, made plans to speak again, and wished each other a Happy Thanksgiving. Over the Holiday, all I could think about was how blessed we were to have such a big family and have everything come so easily to us. I looked at my kids and thought about how many people didn't have this, or were told they couldn't have this.

After speaking with the GC again, we provided my obstetrician and hospital delivery information so they could request and review the medical records with their physician team. Once we passed their health test, they asked us to write up a description of ourselves, our family, and why we wanted to do this. While we worked on this, we were put in touch with a psychologist who would discuss the process and go through a mental health exam with both me and my husband. Her evaluation of our answers would result in an opinion on our suitability for the huge undertaking we were signing up for.

The next phase was matching with potential intended parents (IPs). My husband and I filled out a questionnaire regarding our thoughts on many aspects of a pregnancy that all parents and partners have to consider. The "What ifs?" and the "preferences" on religious beliefs, lifestyles, etc. We needed to make sure our thoughts and feelings matched with theirs since we were trusting each other with very precious material. The agency read through our profile, saw our preferences, and matched us up with a couple they thought we'd click with. Then magic happened.

We Skyped with each other. From across the world. It was amazing. We knew right away that our personalities were perfect and our backgrounds knew we could trust each other easily. We couldn't wait to continue on this journey. But there was a lot more work to be done.

My husband and I had to attend numerous doctor visits involving exams, laboratory tests, and medical histories. Our background checks were done, and all aspects of our lives were scrutinized. Did I care? No way. This is life we're talking about. Not a date. At no time was I made to feel like a "walking, talking uterus". Or, "taken advantage of". If anything, I couldn't thank THEM enough for allowing us, choosing us, to help make them a family.

We both worked with our own lawyers to draw up contracts covering all aspects of the pregnancy, birth/delivery, parentage, etc. Decisions on life-or-death situations were written in black and white for everyone to see. This whole process was very transparent. At no time did we ever feel we didn't know what was going on, what to expect, or what was expected of us. There it was; a forty-plus page document.

Notice throughout this letter, the continuous use of the words "us" and "we". I never, ever, felt like I was alone or pressured into a decision. This affects everyone involved, not just "me". I might have the parts that matter, but without the community of support and medical advice, none of this would have happened.

I cannot wait until the children are old enough to understand the amount of love, time, science, and thought that went into bringing them life. Surrogacy should be protected. A reasonably regulated process should be maintained and recommended.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any further questions or concerns.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine M. Crincoli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Dr. Christine M. Crincoli

Cathy Denker  
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Rep: Kurt Daudt  
Sen. Michelle Benson

Dear Minnesota Legislatures,

My name is Cathy Denker. I was raised in a middle class family in Bloomington, MN. I graduated from Jefferson High School in 1991. I married my husband of 21 years on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1995. I graduated with an BS in Business Marketing in 1996. For the next 8 years I worked as a marketing and graphic design professional making close to \$47,000 annual salary. In 2003, my husband and I made the decision for me to stay home with our daughter Megan and provide daycare for a few other children. He is a mechanical engineering manager and has been providing for us well for the last 13 years since I began to stay home with our children. In 2012, I was a gestational carrier of twin boys. I am a strong evangelical Christian and truly believe God orchestrated the miracle of Ellis and Julian.

I feel very strongly that the MN legislature needs to pass a bill supporting assisted reproduction, egg donors, surrogates, and gestational carriers. In 2012, I had the amazing experience of being a gestational carrier for a dear friend of mine. I had one child in 2001, but could not conceive again on my own. In 2005, my friend and I both struggled to grow our families. On April 1st, 2006 I delivered healthy twin girls who were conceived using assisted reproduction. My friend was also able to deliver healthy twins 14 months later after using assisted reproduction to get pregnant. We were both thrilled with the expansion of our families.

My friend and I remained very close. Then, tragically, in 2011, she lost her 3rd child, Mila (who was conceived naturally), during childbirth due to a deadly infection. After the stillbirth of their daughter in 2011, and a hysterectomy following her birth, she was no longer able to conceive and carry a child. The minute I heard this news, I said out loud (although no one was there to hear me), "I would totally carry another baby for her" if that is what they decided to do. I was so convinced on this fact that I even called my doctor to find out if I even could since I was already 39 years old.

It would be 5 more months before my heart's desire to help my friends would come to light. In December of 2011, we attended a church event together. During our time together, she mentioned their desire to have another child of their own. Needless to say, I broke down into

tears and shared my heart with her that I would love to carry a baby for them. I had felt so helpless when they lost their daughter, Mila. This was something I could do for them.

After we both had a serious discussion with our husbands' and received their support, we began the process. Thanks to the doctors and attorney, the process was seamless and amazingly joyful through and through. My friends were able to share the experience of my pregnancy and birth of their boys, Ellis and Julian, every step of the way. I required no payment for my time other than having all medical costs and loss of wages covered. I was not taken for granted in any way, and was thrilled to be an instrument of love for their family. Our three girls were also thrilled to be a part of something so amazing. Never during this process was I under the impression I would keep the babies I was carrying. They were not mine. They belonged to Chris and Laura from the beginning. I was simply providing a safe, healthy environment for them to grow. I did it full knowledge of what I was doing and that I would not be keeping them.

Over the last 3 years, we have enjoyed watching Ellis and Julian grow up in the loving arms of their mom and dad; my good friends. There are no words to express my gratitude for the opportunity I had to carry these precious babies for my friend. I sincerely urge you and your fellow legislators to pass a bill in regards to assisted reproduction, egg donors, surrogates, and gestational carriers to make it a safe and healthy process for everyone involved. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

*Cathy Denker*

Cathy Denker  
612-310-3498

Angie Drees  
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July 15, 2016

To whom it may concern,

My name is Angie. I am 41 years old. Im from West Fargo ND. I have 2 children, 1 boy Alex 15 and 1 girl Jayden 11.

I work as a Direct Service Professional for 20 years this year and my husband builds custom corian counter tops for the past 25 years!

We have been married for 10 years. We live in a very nice two story house with a fenced in yard with 4 dogs within blocks from the Elementary school and the High School.

I went to College at the Interstate Business College in Fargo for Medical Assisting back in 1996. After I graduated I ran into a friend who told me about the company I work for now so I applied. I work for the Mentally challenged/handicapped as a Direct Service Professional.

I love it and still do to this day! There is no place in town,(not even the hospital) who can pay me enough what I make now for what I went to school for. We get 2 cash bonuses every year and 1 raise every year. There is no other job place I know of, that does this!!

Between my husband and I we make 115,000 a year. 45,000 from me and 70,000 from him. We also have some land that our cousin's farm that pays us twice a year for rent. So we ARE NOT POOR by any means!!

We use to have 3 children that play hockey, know its only my son Alex and as most people know, hockey is NOT a cheap sport to play in! Especially when he is on 3 teams and has to travel. It's very spendy and very time consuming and wouldn't change it for the world!! If I didn't have the good job I do, he wouldn't be able to play cuz I wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise. He's been playing for the last 11 years and still does to this day!

For those of you who do not know what a direct service professional is, it's a person who helps mentally challenged people with doing the things they need to do in order to live independently and work out in the community, if it's going grocery shopping, riding the bus, or going to the dr. appointment, helping them do laundry or feeding them their meal, helping them fill their medications or whatever is needed. I started working here because I also have a mentally challenged sister who is also very needy and I have been doing this all my life. I really enjoy helping others with things that make them happy. So I have been helping others fulfill their goals and their dreams since I graduated college in 1996 .I find great gratitude in seeing the look on other peoples' faces when they get what they want and feel happy about it, makes me happy that I did a great service for someone and my community!! I really enjoy taking my clients to volunteer in the community as well. One day my client came to me and asked if he could borrow 50 cents to ride the bus cuz all he had was 25 cents and wouldn't be able to get to work without

it, so I gave him the 50 cents. 50 cents means the world to someone with no money, to us, 50 cents is nothing!! I really made his day that day. I'm really glad he is a client that has enough hours from the gov, but there are never enough hours to go around these people need, they can't live without the help we give them. And it is sad to see some of my clients got some hours taken away so now my clients have to go without, sometimes a hot cooked meal or even clean clothes or even 50 cents just to get to work!!

So one day I came upon a commercial on TV that was about donating eggs to help pay for college. Kinda like the commercials you see about the navy trying to recruit people to help pay for their college. They provide a service to the community and so do I, just in a different way! I thought about it for a while, and decided I couldn't donate eggs but I could have a child for someone. So I signed up. I contacted an agency, and I sent them all the necessary paperwork with all of the medical background history stuff that was required. I went to a psychologist and got evaluated (and passed). Took a test with like 250 questions, (and passed). Also had to do blood work every 6 months for stds and such, (and passed). I have met a lot of nice people along the way. In the end result, I delivered 1 singleton and 1 set of twins, vaginally, recently and with no complications. I and all children are all very healthy and I am fit. I still keep in contact with everyone to this day. During the whole time I was pregnant I always just kept saying to myself that I am doing a good service to a special family and they are gonna be very happy in the end, and so will I knowing that the babies are all in happy places so my soul is at ease and I know deep down in my heart everyone will be OK. It makes things easy knowing I am going to "return" the children to their rightful parents. I had fun with them while it lasted. I strongly believe GOD put me on this earth to be a worker for him to make other people happy no matter what it is. If it's borrowing 50 cents or having a child for someone. God did pick a winner, and he always knew in his heart I am a person he can trust with someone else's baby.

I as a surrogate was very happy to be picked from my Intended Parents, I was very glad I was able to help them have a family.

I am clearly not motivated by the money for my services. I have been helping people for a living since 1996. No matter WHAT the need is. I clearly don't need the money. I make a good living with my job and always have and always will.

I was very happy in the end to gladly "return" the babies back to the rightful parents. I don't know why someone would ever want to keep someone else's child/children. I have my own kids and don't need anyone else's. I am happy with what I have.

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risk of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogate arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for me based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

I strongly believe that surrogacy is a good thing and a god send to a lot of people.

All states should allow and reasonably regulate commercial surrogacy. Why wouldn't you want to allow someone to help others to make them happy??? What if it was you? What would you do? What if it was your granddaughter or niece? Put yourself in their shoes.

Surrogates are very special people. Surrogates come in all shapes, sizes and colors. Surrogates are very smart and economically stable people. Surrogates are people you can trust and always count on. It's not fair to judge us cuz of what we do or the reasons we do it. It's not

fair or accurate to label us as of poor, uneducated or underprivileged women. We are none of those!!

Sincerely,

Angie Drees



Kirsten Eickenberg  
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612.741.1047 cell  
Cheryl Youakim: State representative  
Ron Latz: State senator

Dear surrogacy commission members,

I am a 38 year old gestational carrier who gave birth to a baby boy in February of 2016 that belongs to my brother and sister-in-law who could not have children on their own. I currently work as a Senior Product Manager/Senior Consultant, and earned my Master's in Business Administration (MBA) in August of 2007. I earn around \$140,000+ a year, and our household income is \$300,000+ per year. I am Lutheran, and an active participant in my church.

I made the decision to become a surrogate for my brother because I am a mother, and know very well the joys of parenthood. I was lucky, and got pregnant with my two children immediately after going off of birth control. I was able to time their births the way I wanted, and took for granted my ability to get pregnant easily.

In contrast, I watched my brother and his wife struggle with fertility issues for several years. It was a very painful process, and I can only imagine what it would be like to go through that for so long. After each failed attempt at a baby, I wondered if my brother would ever become a father. I found that thought incredibly sad, especially since I believed he would be a great dad. I decided to offer to be their gestational carrier after they had experienced multiple miscarriages, and were down to the last four frozen embryos. They transferred their only embryo that survived the thaw, and it implanted in my uterus.

The surrogacy process was very stringent, and most people have no idea how difficult it is to be a surrogate. Not only are there high medical standards (being in good health, free from disease, and no previous pregnancy complications), I also needed to go through extensive counseling and other psychological testing. My husband also had to be tested for disease, and go through counseling and psychological testing. I specifically remember our counselor walking through all the steps in the process, especially some that are more difficult. At one point, she pulled out the massive needle that I would need to use to give myself hormone shots each day. She wanted to make sure I (and my husband) went into the process fully aware. We also spent quite a bit of time talking with my brother and sister-in-law about key parts of the process, and making sure we agreed on what actions to take in various circumstances (e.g. my willingness to do extra testing like amniocentesis if needed). This was all documented in the resulting contract.

One of the most common questions I'm asked is how I could give back the baby after birth. This was actually the easiest part of the process, especially since the baby was not mine to begin with. I couldn't wait until the birth because that meant I had fulfilled my gift to my brother. The sperm and egg belonged to my brother and his wife, not to me and my husband. If I had wanted more children, I would have done so long ago, and my husband would not have gone through a vasectomy procedure. One specific example that demonstrated my detachment from this baby was when I started bleeding at around 14 weeks during the pregnancy. I had never bled before with my children during pregnancy, and

didn't know if this episode would result in a miscarriage. The first thoughts that came to my mind were how bad I would feel for my brother if that happened, and when I needed to receive medical help if it got to that point. I guarantee if it had been my child inside of me, my reaction would have been completely different.

I was paid about \$10,000 to go through the gestational carrier process, and this was compensation for the wear and tear on my body, and need for recovery time after the baby was born. In no way did I make the decision to be a surrogate based on this payment. No one was buying a baby. I had been pregnant two times before, and the idea that any amount of money could compensate for the daily grind of pregnancy – every minute of every day, especially when sick – is naïve. I could easily make this money a lot of other ways. My decision to be a gestational carrier could *only* come out of love for my brother.

My children are currently 9 and 11. Our family journeyed through this surrogacy process together, and I was open and honest with them at every step of the way. Not only did my children completely understand what I was doing, they also knew this baby was not their sibling, and he would be returned to his parents at birth. Our family never thought this was strange, and on the contrary, we viewed it as a gift. I was able to teach my children that we all have something special to give to others. I never knew my ease of getting pregnant and carrying a child could help other people in such a profound way. This gift will be a legacy I leave behind – something that will live on and be remembered.

I am not a poor, uneducated, or vulnerable woman. I am quite competent in my abilities to make my own decisions, and understand what I'm getting into. I do not need legislation to protect me from making a poor decision, just because I am a woman. In addition, I strongly believe this process does not turn human life into a commodity. On the contrary, surrogacy brings a team of people together to solve the growing issue of infertility in a way that's based on love and the desire to help fulfil one of the most basic human dreams - being a parent.

I strongly believe surrogacy needs to be protected as an option for parents who cannot conceive, and reasonably regulated here in Minnesota. I'm urging the commission to make that recommendation.

Best regards,  
Kirsten Eickenberg

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**Ann Estes**

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Rosemount, MN 55068  
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**Representative Anna Wills and Senator Greg Clausen**

July 15th, 2016

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my surrogacy story. It is important for you to accurately hear what surrogacy REALLY is and not those rare "horror stories" that some would like to portray. My journey to become a gestational carrier began in September of 1987. That was the year I met, Kerry. We were in 6th grade at Scott Highlands Middle School. Together, we rocked some SERIOUSLY awesome bangs and quickly became the best of friends. Though we ended up at different High Schools, we still remained friends due to our shared social circle and love of music and choir. After graduating, Kerry and I lost track of each other during our college years. Thankfully, (by the grace of Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook), we were able to reconnect in 2008. It was during that time, that I became aware of Kerry and her husband Todd's infertility struggles. In 2011, after more than 2 years of trying to conceive, Kerry was able to get pregnant with twins using IVF treatment. Sadly, her children Jacob and Eleanor were born severely prematurely at 23.6 weeks gestation. Jake lived for 12 hours, while Ellie passed away 3 days after her birth. I cannot begin to describe to you how awful it is to watch your friends suffer this kind of loss. It's absolutely heartbreaking. Soul crushing. To make matters worse, a week after her children passed away, Kerry was diagnosed with Thyroid Cancer. Her subsequent treatments left her body unable to carry her remaining embryos, so they began to pursue adoption. Kerry and Todd spent several years on the adoption list, twice nearly being chosen by birth mothers. It was a rollercoaster ride. Once again, it pained me to see two good hearted Christian people struggling to grow a family they so desperately wanted.

In June of 2014, I had an epiphany. "What if I could help carry their baby for them?" I had been blessed with 3 healthy children of my own. Pregnancy had been easy for me to achieve and while my husband Kyle and I were done growing our own family, I knew that at age 39, my body was still capable of carrying a child. You may ask the question. Why? Why did I choose to become a gestational surrogate? It's quite simple. My children are

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my whole world and I couldn't imagine my life without them. All of us who walk this earth are one catastrophe away from needing help from someone, at some point in our lifetimes. If it had been me struggling with infertility, I would have hoped and prayed someone might have offered to help me. The Bible says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." It's that simple. My soul understood the deepest desires of Kerry and Todd's heart... because I AM a parent. I understood their yearning and suffering. They deserved to be parents and so I decided to offer my help. On September 29th, 2015 I delivered Kerry and Todd's baby boy. His name is Wesley and he is a happy and healthy miracle baby!

I have told people many, many times that this journey was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. It's as if someone has given me a debit card filled with love and gratitude and I get to make daily withdrawals from that love account. I get the joy of seeing Kerry and Todd parent their son. (My husband and I are his Godparents). He is their pride and joy! It is amazing what science, technology and FAITH can do together. I would encourage anyone, if you are given the opportunity to help someone...and I mean TRULY help someone... do it. It is the most amazing and glorious experience. Pregnancy isn't easy and delivery certainly isn't a cakewalk! But I can say, I would do it again in a heartbeat to help reunite that little boy with his parents.

Opponents of surrogacy will try to tell you that women like me are ***"economically and emotionally vulnerable women"*** who are turned ***"into a breeder class, subjecting their physical and psychological health to the whims of the wealthy"***. I am here today to tell you NOTHING could be further from the truth! The clinic that we used had very strict guidelines and protocol set up. I had to be medically, psychologically and financially vetted before I could become a surrogate. Meaning, I had to be tested and screened for both my physical and mental health. I also had to prove that I wasn't receiving any financial assistance from the Government. These 3 protocols are designed to "weed out" those who are not fit for surrogacy. At no point did I feel taken advantage of, coerced or exploited. I volunteered to do this. In fact, I find it highly offensive to be categorized by this commission as someone who was "exploited". I have my Bachelor's Degree in Child Development from the University of Minnesota. I am substitute teacher in school district 196 and my husband and I are financially secure. I didn't receive any compensation to carry my friend's child, however I would never fault any other surrogate for doing so. These women are being paid a reasonable amount for their time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. This is no different than legislators like you, being paid above and beyond your primary employment for your time and services in

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performing the duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for my intended parents (and women like me should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of our motivation). My decision to be a surrogate was based solely on my desire to help them achieve their dreams of parenthood. Surrogacy is rooted in LOVE and compassion. To label it anything else is erroneous, hurtful and highly offensive.

Human suffering can come in many forms. Most of us think of suffering as; starvation, illness/disease or abuse. But the suffering associated with infertility is a quiet one. There are those who are childless by choice. However, those who are childless NOT by their own choosing suffer from immense pain and sorrow. I am an able bodied woman, of sound mind and spirit. I chose to help my friends who were suffering from infertility and loss. Why would you consider the desire to help end human suffering, as a bad thing? The fact that science and technology have grown in such a way as to make this a viable option, should be celebrated (not condemned.)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Estes

# Amanda Farber

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10641 Smetana Rd #211, Minnetonka, MN 55343 | 763-203-2572 | mandiefarber@yahoo.com

**July 15, 2016**

## **To whom it may concern:**

First, before I get in to anything else, I'd just like to say hello. I hope your day is going well and that there was something today that brought you joy.

My name is Amanda Farber, I am 30 years old, mother of two young boys, and I was a gestational surrogate for two amazing individuals and hand the honor of carrying their sweet baby girl. I am a Security Compliance Generalist for a Fortune 100 company. While I have attended college for a couple years, I have not completed any single degree. That's my fault; I just can't settle on what I want to graduate with since my interests have changed over the years. I also have started a little side business with Jamberry just a few months ago so I am getting my feet under me with that venture. While I am not overly religious, I do believe there is a God and that all young people (Children) should have some sort of religious teachings, something to base their beliefs on and grow from there, i.e. decide for themselves what religion best suits them, albeit Catholic, Lutheran, Muslim, Buddhist, Mormon, etc.. I grew up Protestant Reform. I do not have any political affiliations – the options for any party are rather undesirable the last 12 years of my voting capability.

My surrogacy story started all the way back when I was 16 and diagnosed with endometriosis. For someone who only really wanted to grow up, become a police officer, marry the man of my dreams and raise a family – I was devastated to find out that I very well may not be able to have kids. I had three miscarriages before I got pregnant with my first son. While I gained more weight than I would have liked, I *loved* being pregnant. I had no morning sickness, maybe 5 minutes of heart burn once and I felt so... alive. Blessed. Thankful. I wanted to give back. Fearing that I'd never be able to carry a child of my own and knowing that if I couldn't, one day I'd be looking for someone to be my surrogate or looking at adoption. I knew that if I ever was able to have children, I'd be a surrogate for another person/couple who wasn't able to have their own. It was truly something for my bucket list. I wouldn't feel right using my own eggs, so I wanted to be a gestational surrogate. My son was about 6 months old when I decided to be a surrogate and actually start the process.

I researched on whether to go with a company or do it privately – for legal matters, it was a lot easier to go through a company than crossing my T's and dotting my I's all by myself. So, I selected the company that I went through. I got to decide who I wanted to be a surrogate for (of course they had to decide to have me as their surrogate as well) and who I didn't want to be a surrogate for. The company made the process comfortable and easy, Of course I had to be within certain guidelines as far as health, weight, non-smoker/drug user, pass a psychological evaluation, etc. I passed everything. I was on my way to fulfilling a dream. After meeting the intended parents and really liking them, I knew I had made the right decision. I had a huge support network of friends, relatives and coworkers. I couldn't have asked for a better set of people to give this gift to. So, I started the medications to make my uterus prime real-estate. Since I was a gestational surrogate, they had an egg donor and I went and had the embryos transferred. While I can honestly say that my surrogacy was my worst pregnancy, I was sick for the majority of it and in the middle of summer too! I would do it all over in a heartbeat. It was an amazing and humbling experience. As this child grows inside of you, it is an odd feeling to loved something and yet not have the emotional connection that you would with your own child. I knew going into this that it's not my husband's sperm, it's not my egg; nothing about this is mine, except the experience. I never viewed the child I gestated for the intended parents as "my child"; I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents' child, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once it was born. It was natural and simply the way it should be. I got to watch the joy on the parents face when their baby girl came into this world. It was truly amazing all around. I had my second son a year and 4 days after that. The pregnancy with him proved that I just got lucky with my first son's pregnancy, as I was just marginally less sick with him than with my surrogacy.

We have remained in contact with the intended parents and they keep me updated on their girl. They had asked me to be their surrogate again for another child, but at the time I had just found out that I was pregnant with son #2. They found

another surrogate who blessed them with a son. I am so happy for them and those children got an absolutely devoted and loving set of parents. While I was compensated for my time, expenses and obligations during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents pregnancy for them, I was not paid for a baby.

Throughout this whole process, never did I feel pressured into anything nor taken advantage of. It was a positive process. I do not think that the government needs to intervene to protect me or anyone else who wishes to become a surrogate and I definitely do not think it should be banned altogether. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman. That would be a shame. I have known too many people in my life struggling to have a family that taking the option of surrogacy away would be killing their hopes altogether. Surrogacy should be protected and a reasonably regulated process here in MN.

I am not poor, uneducated and I definitely was not taken advantage of by the wealthy (their economic status was irrelevant) to gestate their children. It was a gift from the heart. I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I did not sell "my" baby to the intended parents; I RETURNED the intended parents' baby to them after they temporarily placed her in my custody to gestate for them with the definite understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their child to them when I had completed my task.

I hope you take my words and the words of the other women here to support surrogacy to heart. Don't let the misrepresentations of a few affect the many.

**Sincerely,**

**Amanda Farber**

Stephanie Faris

7/14/2016

19513 Twin Lakes Rd NW Elk River, MN 55330

Steph.Faris@outlook.com

320-766-2444

Senator Mary Kiffmeyer

Representative Nick Zerwas

Representative Eric Lucero

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Stephanie Faris. I am 25 years old and currently pregnant with my intended parents' child. I am a stay at home mother to four beautiful children of my own and in college to finish my Bachelor's Degree in teaching that will be complete in spring of 2017.

My family is not poor. Our annual income is \$103,000. I am not primarily motivated by, nor do I necessarily need, the money paid for my services. I am not getting paid for a baby. I am receiving a reasonable compensation for my time, obligations, expenses and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).



As stated above, I am not uneducated. I am a successful student, excelling in my studies and will soon be an Elementary Education Teacher. My husband has a Bachelor's Degree in Health Administration and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. We are well-educated people who made the educated decision to pursue surrogacy.

We are both Christians whom believe in helping and supporting others. I believe my job in this world is to help others which is why I am going to be a teacher and also chose to be a surrogate. I feel I can make a positive difference in the lives of others.

I chose to be a surrogate to help a loving couple become a family. Why? Because my family means the world to me; I couldn't imagine life without them and being a mother has been the greatest blessing God has ever given me. To struggle to have a child would be devastating and to be told that there was no hope to pursue my dream of having a family would be crushing. I have seen family and friends struggle to conceive and hold on to a pregnancy, suffering many miscarriages and devastation and it is heartbreaking. Becoming a mother has been the greatest experience of my life and I want to help someone else feel the same joy and complete fulfillment of having a family as I do.

My family is complete with our four wonderful blessings. I have no desire to have another baby of my own and know that the child I am currently carrying is not my baby, never was my baby, and never will be my baby. I am currently 28 weeks pregnant with my intended parents' child and am so excited for them to witness their child's birth and finally become the family they have struggled so long to become. I will not sell "my" baby to the intended parents; I will RETURN the intended parents' baby to them after they temporarily placed her in my custody to gestate for them with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I

would return their child to them when I had completed my task. I do not view the child I am gestating for the intended parents as “my child;” I have always known and accepted the child was the intended parents and have experienced no physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once she is born. This has always been the end goal and like I stated earlier, I look forward to fulfilling my goal of helping complete their family.

I am not being repressed or taken advantage of by the “wealthy” to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help, and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status is irrelevant to me.

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of a surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman. When I contacted IARC to get more information on becoming a surrogate, I was given many resources and information on the process, what it all would entail, what would be expected of me, and the steps I would need to take to do this. I had to be seen by my regular OB doctor to prove I could carry another healthy pregnancy and also go through extensive psychological testing to make sure that I was fit to carry a pregnancy for someone else, to find out my true intentions for pursuing surrogacy, and to make sure I completely understood what I was doing; I would be carrying a child that was biologically not mine in any way through IVF and once the baby is born, she would be returned to her parents

and my piece in the matter would be complete. I passed all the required screenings and after matching with the intended parents we created an extensive legal contract stating each party's expectations throughout this process. My job is to carry their child and their job is to raise her once she is born. After going through all the screening and receiving all the information I have, I made the educated decision to pursue being a gestational surrogate. IARC has walked me through each and every step of the process and answered all of my questions as needed so I have always felt competent and well informed on each decision that had to be made. I do not need the government to make decisions for me. I am an independent adult who is very capable of making her own decisions.

Surrogacy helps build families and I strongly believe it should be protected and a reasonably regulated process in Minnesota. I urge the commission to make that recommendation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Faris". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Stephanie Faris

Carey Flamer-Powell  
Director & Founder  
All Families Surrogacy, LLC  
[www.allfamiliesurrogacy.com](http://www.allfamiliesurrogacy.com)  
503-906-7960 phone

Dear Committee and Community Members,

My name is Carey Flamer-Powell and I am a wife and the mother of a wonderful 4 year old little girl. I am also a gestational carrier, who delivered a little boy almost 2 years ago for a wonderful couple who reside here in the United States. Besides the pregnancy and birth of my own daughter, I can unequivocally say that being a gestational carrier was the most amazing experience of my life. I am well aware, as are many other surrogates, that surrogacy is a poorly understood and often controversial subject. As with many other things in life, it seems only the extremely rare and outrageous surrogacy stories seem to make it into the news these days.

Not reported nearly as often are the majority of surrogacy stories: happy, deeply emotional stories of joy and friendship, of bringing hope and new life into the world. That was my personal experience with surrogacy -- I was and still am extraordinarily joyful and proud of being able to help an otherwise childless couple realize their dream of parenthood. While every pregnancy has it's natural stress and discomfort, never once did I feel taken advantage of, mislead or misinformed about what surrogacy entails. In fact, it was just the opposite. The rigorous screening and qualification process to become a surrogate provides ample opportunity for the surrogate and parents to become fully informed about all of the implications and risks involved, and all parties move forward willingly with full knowledge of the process. When proper screening and protocols are followed, surrogacy is perhaps the most informed and thoroughly vetted process to parenthood I have ever witnessed. Sadly, some of the stories you may have heard about are undoubtedly the stories where proper screening and protocols were not followed and one or both parties suffered the consequences.

There is nothing I would change about my experience as a surrogate and in fact, I would do it again in a heartbeat. I cherish the lasting bond and relationship I built with the Intended Parents, which continues to this day, and I am proud of my role in helping to create their family. Surrogacy is a gift for all involved and should remain a viable family building option in all 50 states.

Thank You,

Carey Flamer-Powell

Christina Fleagle  
21 Raymond Circle  
Agawam MA 01001  
(413) 301-6703

July 13, 2016

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Christina Fleagle, I am currently acting as a Gestational Carrier for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. I am 31 years of age, have a household income of \$115,000 a year. I have completed 2 years of college before getting married and starting my own family. I have been married now for 10 years, have owned a home for 8 years and have been a mother for 8 and a half years. I have been employed full time for the same company for the past 15 years and work from home full time as well as take care of my 2 children full time, act as the PTO president of my children's elementary school and volunteer whenever and how ever possible in the community.

I knew I wanted to be a gestational surrogate after I had my first child in December of 2007 and when I was done with my family of 2 boys in June of 2010 I was approached by my cousins to act as their Gestational Carrier. My cousin's sister acted as the egg donor, and I carried for them. I delivered twins in 2010. A little girl named Sydney and a little boy named Oliver. My Cousins had been trying to either adopt or find a carrier for 8 years and it was truly a blessing to be able to help them achieve their goal. Delivering their children for them was one of the most positive and rewarding experiences of my life. In order to achieve our goal we started at our local Reproductive Medicine Clinic which is Baystate Reproductive Medicine in Springfield MA. The wonderful staff there was able to take us through the process step by step. These steps included sessions with a Psychologist -both independently and a group session, and hiring lawyers to make sure we had a fair and complete contract in place. Along the way my children were able to see the process and know what we were doing and I purchased a children's book on surrogacy to help them understand called The Kangaroo Pouch. Both myself – and my children went through the whole process knowing these children were the parents' children – they were not ours. My children would talk to the babies through my stomach – and would tell them about their parents. Not only was this a positive experience for me but for my children. They watched their mother do something special for a family member and they were taught to do good things for others.

I delivered Oliver and Sydney in October of 2012 and when the day came for them to go home with their parents we said goodbye and they left on their way home to Ohio. The best part of the whole experience was seeing the family I helped create, and my children were happy to have cousins to play with when we visited Ohio. Since then we have visited Ohio many times, and they have visited us and its always wonderful to see how loved these children are, and to see the happy family. No children could be loved more then those two are loved by their parents. I have never once felt as though they are my children, or that I would want to raise them. They are their parents' children and I was happy to help them have their family.

My second pregnancy acting as a Gestational Carrier was for good friends also in Ohio. I delivered their baby girl in April of 2014. Rogan has an older Brother Easton who is 2 years older and who was also delivered by a carrier. This was another rewarding experience and another positive experience for my children. By now they knew about the process and were happy to tell everyone mommy was doing

it again. The journey was handled the same way with the Psychologist appointments, and lawyers to review the contracts and represent each side. I was able to deliver a healthy baby girl in to her loving parents' arms. Once again I could look at a happy family I helped expand. Since her birth we have also visited them in Ohio and its a pleasure to see a happy family and two loved and happy children who want for nothing in life. They are surrounded by their Parents, and Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles who all love them and it doesn't matter how they were delivered.

Both of these pregnancies I went through for family and friends and accepted very little compensation. These pregnancies were not done for money, and these children were not brought in to this world for financial gain. They were born because their parents wanted to love them and I carried them because I wanted their parents to have their dream of a family. These children are loved, and will always be loved. They have wonderful families who surround them with love and support. I was forever changed for the better at knowing I was able to do something so positive for others. I know that when I am gone I have left something so positive in this world other than my own wonderful children. My children know what it looks like to do something selfless for others and I hope will be able to do something selfless for someone else one day. They always knew these were not our babies – and they belonged to their parents and were happy to see them go to their families at the end.

I saw this as such a positive experience that once I carried for my family and for my friends I decided I wanted to do it again. I found a local agency and have been matched with a new couple to carry for a third time. Once again we have had to have lawyers to review contracts, we had social worker appointments to make sure we were ok – and would work together well. It's always a long process but its always a process that is worth it. Although we are very earl in my most recent pregnancy I am excited and cannot wait to be able to give my new set of Intended parents a baby who is already so loved despite not being born yet. My children know what mommy is doing again and know the intended parents and are extremely excited for them.

Everything I have done as a Gestational Carrier and to be a Gestational Carrier has been nothing but a positive experience in my life. Surrogacy both as a Gestation carrier and a Traditional surrogate is something that needs to be protected. Women have the right to be able to help others if they choose to. The whole process is put under intense scrutiny by doctors, and social workers, psychologists and lawyers, and all of these steps are put in to place to help the parents and to help the surrogates. Let people like myself help parents start and build their families, allow us to continue to give that gift willingly and selflessly. This is one of the most rewarding experiences in a surrogate's life, and the biggest event in an intended parents life. A few bad experiences cannot outweigh the multitude of happy families created through surrogacy.

Thank you for taking the time to read of my experiences, and I hope that this will help prove what a positive experience this can be for the surrogate, the surrogates family and for the children and families creates through this process.

Christina Fleagle

July 15, 2016

AnDee Flohr  
14318 Alma Avenue  
Rosemount, MN 55068  
dnaflohr@hotmail.com  
651-335-5630  
Representative Anna Wills (R) District: 57B  
Senator Greg D. Clausen (DFL) District 57

Dean Minnesota Surrogacy Commission,

Please accept this letter as I am unable to attend your meeting in person. My name is AnDee Flohr, and I have been a gestational surrogate mother to three children. My first encounter with surrogacy occurred in 2007 when I was 34 years old. At that time and to this day, I have been a teacher within a correctional facility. In 2007, my personal income was over \$46,000; in 2015 it was over \$66,000. My household income has increased over the years from \$61,000 in 2007 and is expected to reach \$100,000 or more in 2016. In 1995, I completed my bachelor's degree at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. In 2014, I completed my master's degree at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am of Lutheran faith and lean toward democratic political views.

As stated above, my first encounter with surrogacy was in 2007 when I saw information that surrogates were needed. The idea intrigued me; I researched the opportunity to help another family. I knew this was something I could do. I had great pregnancies with my own three children. I wanted to help a family to have the child or children they dreamed about for years.

With my husband's support, I contacted an out-of-state agency and began the surrogate journey. After extensive background verification (medical, psychological, financial, motivational, etc.), our family was matched with a couple from New Jersey. In 2008, our family assisted a great couple to create the family they dreamed of having for several years. After a fairly uneventful twin pregnancy, I gave birth to two boys in September 2008. This surrogate experience was amazing. After carrying the twins for 37.5 weeks, it was a marvelous moment when the new parents saw and held their twins for the first time. Since the birth, we have had the privilege to remain in contact with this family. In fact, our two families are meeting at Wisconsin Dells in December to enjoy some fun together. It has been wonderful to see this family grow and how the children have forever changed their parents' lives.

A few years later, I decided I was ready to assist one more couple in achieving their dream family. I decided to work with the Minnesota surrogate agency IARC (International Assisted Reproduction Center). In 2012 and 2013, after being matched with an international couple, I completed three rounds of IVF (in vitro fertilization). The first round resulted in a miscarriage at 16 weeks, the second round did not work, and the third round resulted in a very early miscarriage. It was then determined by all involved to go our separate ways. It was wonderful to have an agency to work with especially during the times of bad news. The professionals at IARC were able to assist with communicating negative news to the intended parents taking this burden off of my shoulders.

In December 2015, I gave birth to a surrogate baby after being matched with a different international couple. In my introduction letter to them, I wrote, "With our previous surrogate experience, we feel more informed on the entire surrogate process. Carrying a baby or two to birth is what I consider the "easy" part. Parenting after birth is when the real challenges and joys take place. Our family wishes you the best on your journey to become parents!" We have built a nice relationship with this newest family as well and look forward to our continued contact throughout the years ahead.

This final birth completed my surrogate pregnancy journeys. However, I still share my experiences and try to educate others regarding the process. Over the years, I have received many intriguing questions regarding my surrogacy experiences. Many family members and friends have asked me, "Was it hard to give up your baby?" Absolutely not! For me, each of those babies were never mine. I was just tending to them as they developed until they could be with their true family.

Through the years, I have heard about the surrogate horror stories. From what I have perceived, most horror situations arise when a reputable surrogate agency is not involved. These agency professionals help with education of all involved (surrogates and intended parents). The agency professionals track medical results and are great sounding boards for any concern that comes into play. The government did not need to "protect" me from myself in making the decisions I made with the support of my husband. With proper evaluation prior to pregnancy and oversight by a reputable surrogate agency, women can continue assisting families in a positive way. I believe surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process here in Minnesota. I desire the commission to make that recommendation.

As you can see from the information I provided, I was not a poor, uneducated surrogate while in my surrogate journeys; nor was I that way prior to or after my surrogate journeys. Due to working with reputable surrogate agencies, I was informed throughout the entire process. I was screened to the utmost extent both medically and psychologically to be sure that my participation would not negatively impact me and that I was participating voluntarily. I was able to make necessary and good decisions regarding my participation in surrogacy. My surrogate journeys were very fulfilling. I helped two great couples achieve their dream families!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AnDee Flohr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

AnDee Flohr



Colette Friedrichs  
9462 Teakwood Lane N  
Maple Grove, Mn 55369  
320-493-6077

July 15, 2016

As woman, who got a small glimpse into the horrible feeling of possible infertility when diagnosed with PCOS, I wish I could make sure no woman ever felt that feeling. Being a mom is the best feeling and “job” in the world! I know all the joy and love it brings into my life and I have always wanted to bring that joy and love into others’ lives. The feeling I had when I got to see my intended parents hold their baby for the first time was the best feeling in the world. I have never been happier, excited and have a feeling of calmness run through me like it did at that moment. I am so thankful I got to experience my surrogacy journey and not only help build a family but make a life-long friendship with the parents. This was the greatest experience in my life and one I hope to enjoy again someday soon.

Now for a little background about me and who I am. I received my bachelors in chemistry from St. Olaf College and am currently getting my MBA through Bethel University. I am a senior engineer (chemist) for a global company in Bloomington where I take pride in my job, my career growth and continual education. I have a great paying job and am in no need or motivated by money for surrogacy. I simply want to help out intended parents who would not be able to have a biological child of their own without my help. Surrogacy is an amazing gift and I am so lucky to be able to provide that gift for a deserving couple(s).

Although not all surrogates get paid, their pay is justifiable for the time, obligation, expenses and services they provide during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents’ pregnancy for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman. When working through a surrogacy journey, I went through many screenings including psychological evaluations and blood test to make sure I am not only healthy and able to carry a baby for the intended parents but that I am also emotionally ready to embark on the journey. These are all things that should be a part of surrogacy and an area where

legislation could help to regulate and make sure surrogates are getting the proper screening before committing to a journey and contract.

I did not sell “my” baby to the intended parents; I RETURNED the intended parents’ baby to them after they temporarily placed him in my custody to gestate for them with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their child to them when I had completed my task. I never viewed the child I gestated for the intended parents as “my child;” I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents’ child, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once it was born. It was natural and simply the way it should be.

Surrogacy is an amazing way for parents to have children of their own if they are unable to carry themselves and in no way should be an option that is taken away from them. Just like adoption there should be regulations helping protect all those involved to make sure the right procedures are being done and testing being performed but in no way should it be made illegal. The only psychological consequence I have from being a surrogate is the amazing experience and friendship I now have and knowing in my heart the amazing gift I was able to provide. I am not only happy I did this but I am proud to say I was able to help start a family and provide a safe environment for the baby to gestate until it was rightfully returned to his parents. My surrogate baby is one of the happiest babies I have seen and wouldn’t be possible without surrogacy.

Sincerely a loving Surrogate,  
Colette Friedrichs

Pamela J Garwood  
2353 Stonecrest Path NW  
Prior Lake MN 55372  
HM: 952-426-9939  
Garwoods95@gmail.com

July 17, 2016

Dear Senator/Representative,

I have been married to my husband for almost 21 years. We are both born and raised in Central Iowa and moved to MN in 1994. We both have our Bachelor's Degrees. Most would agree at this point that my husband and I are both educated. Going forward in this letter I will focus on myself, if anyone wishes to discuss my husband in more detail, please contact me.

I was raised by both my parents in a Christian home. My mother passed in 1997 due to Cancer. My father has been lucky enough to find love again and has been married to his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife for almost 17 years. I state this information so you know I come from a strong family environment.

My husband and I have three children ages 17, 14 and 11. While raising our children I have been both a working mother as well as a stay-at-home mother. My husband and I made the decision together when it was in the best interest of our family for me to be home with our children and when it was time to 'return to the work force'. I've had many occupations since I started working at the age of 16. My most recent career of 7 years is in the insurance industry. To become a licensed insurance producer in Minnesota I took both the Property/Casualty and Life/Health Insurance classes and passed both exams. Additionally, as part of the state requirements to maintain my insurance license I attend Continuing Education classes. If obtaining my Bachelor's Degree wasn't enough, one would think the additional state mandated insurance classes and exams sufficient information to support the fact that I am educated. Please contact me directly if you would like documentation regarding my education.

After our family was complete, I decided to become a Gestational Surrogate. I made this decision of my own free will. My husband supported my decision. At no time was I coerced into making a decision I was not comfortable with. I was never repressed or taken advantage of by the 'wealthy' to gestate their child(ren). My intended parents could not have had a child without my help and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status was irrelevant to me.

At no time was I primarily motivated by, nor did I necessarily need the money paid for my services. I did not get paid for a baby. I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations,

expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of a natural or surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman. HOW ABSURD, RIGHT? Several years ago Elected Officials such as yourselves deemed it 'OK' for women to vote in all elections. I have a difficult time understanding how I can be smart enough and not coerced to vote for a particular candidate but I can't be trusted to make a decision for myself regarding sharing the joy of children to help people complete their families.

I did not sell "my" baby to the intended parents; I RETURNED the intended parents' baby to them after they temporarily placed her/them in my custody to gestate for them with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their child(ren) to them when I had completed my task.

I never viewed the child(ren) I gestated for the intended parents as "my child;" I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents' child, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child(ren) once it (they) was (were) born. It was natural and simply the way it should be.

During the process of becoming a surrogate, my husband and I both met with a psychologist. Multiple times in fact, as I have been a surrogate more than once. We also had a group counseling session with one set of intended parents since we were all 'local' to the Twin City area. My husband and I both have taken the MMPI and MMPI2. The psychologist thought I was of sound mind to make a decision and go through the process of gestating a child for someone else. Additionally, I discussed my decision to be a Gestational Surrogate with my primary physician. I have seen the same primary physician for over 17 years. She knows me, my husband and my children. She fully supported my decision to become a gestational surrogate. At no time during the multiple surrogacy journeys did she have any doubts as to my ability to give the child(ren) back to her/their parents. Since both the psychologist and my primary physician are licensed in the State of Minnesota, I presume their judgement of me based on

their medical experience and expertise to be sound. If you require documentation of their education or their judgement of myself as a surrogate, please contact me.

Instead of banning surrogacy in Minnesota, Surrogacy needs to be protected and reasonably regulated.

Sincerely,

*Pamela J Garwood*

2353 Stonecrest Path NW

Prior Lake MN 55372

HM: 952-426-9939

Garwoods95@gmail.com

Amelia Hobbins  
22537 Fawn Trail, Rogers MN 55437  
612-655-9646  
Amelia2605@hotmail.com  
Representatives:  
Senator Warren Limmer  
House Representative Joyce Peppin

To whom it may concern,

I am a 28-year-old married mother of three children and am currently in the process of becoming a gestational surrogate for two wonderful intended parents with an embryo transfer date scheduled in August of 2016. After graduating college with a bachelor's degree in 2009, I started working for a large not-for-profit financial services organization headquartered here in the Twin Cities and am currently working full time as a Senior Business Development Specialist. I currently earn a \$65,000 annual salary and combined with my husband's income we earn a household income of over \$100,000 per year. We own a home in Rogers MN and can easily meet all of our financial obligations.

I am strongly opposed to the notion that ***Commercial gestational surrogacy turns economically and emotionally vulnerable women into a breeder class, subjecting their physical and psychological health to the whims of the wealthy.***

***I support legally recognizing commercial gestational surrogacy contracts in Minnesota.***

My justification is simple and compelling. I am a well-educated, financially secure, assertive and fiercely independent woman who is motivated to be a gestational surrogate for missional reasons. I have been blessed to have had three healthy pregnancies which resulted in three healthy happy children. My husband and I do not desire to have any more children of our own. By being a gestational surrogate, I feel this is my way of paying forward the blessings I have had so far in my life. The emotional connection I have is with the intended parents, not the baby I will carry. I want nothing more than for the intended parents to know the joys of being parents to a child who they themselves have created at least partially using their own genetics. I do not, nor will I ever, think of their baby as my own because it is not genetically related to me in any way. Just as a nurse in the NICU cares for a baby that was born from its mother's belly too early, I will care for this baby in utero because it's parents are not able to do so themselves.

I am personally offended by the opponent's negative accusations about gestational surrogacy and will fight to defend this wonderful and positive practice in my home state of Minnesota.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Amelia Hobbins

Sophia Hoopman  
10973 Eagle St NW  
Coon Rapids, MN 55433  
218-256-0648  
iluv2sigh@hotmail.com  
Senators: Amy Klobuchar (D), Al Franken (D)  
Representatives: Keith Ellison (D), Erik Paulsen (R)

July 15, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Sophia Hoopman and I was a surrogate in 2011. I am writing this letter to state that I feel that surrogates are not poor, uneducated, repressed, or manipulated in any way. I was 24 years old when I was a surrogate. I decided that I wanted to be a surrogate when I was 18 years old. I have always loved kids and thought that surrogacy would be a great way to help people who cannot have kids naturally. After researching surrogacy, I learned that a woman could not be a surrogate unless they had a child of their own. A year after having my son, I looked into surrogacy again and decided to become a surrogate. During this time, I was a full-time Certified Veterinary Technician, making approximately \$34,000 annually. I had graduated college with an Associates of Applied Science degree in order to perform this job. I was married to my current husband and our total gross income was approximately \$80,000 annually. We do not have any religious or political affiliation.

To become a surrogate, I went through a 6 month process of paperwork, emails, and phone calls with members of the surrogacy company in California just to see if I would qualify to be a surrogate. I had to have physical exams and medical tests with my own personal doctor, as well as a doctor at the surrogate company to ensure I was physically able and fit to carry a child. I also went through psychological testing and counseling to ensure that I was mentally stable and that I understood the commitment that surrogacy can be for a woman. There is a lot of testing and requirements in order to become a surrogate, which is a good thing.

I never perceived the twins I carried to be my own. Biologically, the DNA for the babies was foreign, meaning that I was in no way related to the sperm or the egg donor. Not to mention, after meeting the surrogate parents, I fell in love with them. I could see how much having children meant to them and I was so happy to be able to help them achieve that. We became friends and still communicate to this day. I had no difficulty in seeing the rightful parents have their children, because they were their children, not mine.

I think surrogacy is wonderful! I actually applied to become a surrogate again in 2015, after having my second son, but was denied due to some complications with the first surrogacy. Surrogacy is an important option for many people, because natural conception or adoption are not always options for people. Every woman has the competency to choose whether or not to become a surrogate, because it is not something that just anyone can do. Surrogacy companies are very strict about who they consider to become a surrogate, which helps ensure that surrogates are mentally and physically healthy, as well as psychologically prepared and able to deal with this decision. Surrogacy is never about financial compensation, as surrogate companies help deter women from using surrogacy for this reason. Also, no amount of financial compensation will justify the physical use of a woman's body. A woman would only go through this process because she wanted to do it, not because she wanted to make money.

Surrogacy should be a protected process in Minnesota. Taking away this option will deny people their right to have children of their own, which should not be denied.

Sincerely,  
Sophia Hoopman

Sarah Irons  
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July 15, 2016

Jenifer Loon, David Hann, Erik Paulsen, Amy Klobuchar, Al Franken, and Members of the Legislative Commission on Surrogacy,

I am a 37-year-old mother, wife, and teacher. I am also a gestational surrogate. I am currently matched with an incredibly genuine and kind-hearted couple. I am thrilled to be a part of helping them complete their family. We have had two unsuccessful embryo transfers so far and are now preparing for our third embryo transfer.

I grew up in SW Minneapolis and attended the University of Minnesota where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Family Social Science and a Master's degree in Family Education. I have been teaching part-time at Edina High School for the past 15 years, teaching our Child Psychology and Elementary Education classes. My husband and I live in Eden Prairie with our four young children. My husband is an investment consultant and our annual household income averages \$150,000-\$200,000. I am not poor. I am not uneducated.

I heard about surrogacy when I was a teenager and knew that someday, when my own family was complete, I would be a surrogate. I always wanted to be a mom and I would have been completely heartbroken if I would not have been able to have children. I would have hoped that someone would have been willing and able to help me. The days that my children were born were the best days of my life. My dreams came true, I got my happily ever after, and now I am helping another family get their happily ever after. When I think back to the moments when I held my babies for the very first time, the complete and utter happiness that I was feeling, the feeling of my heart exploding with love; and I think about being able to help someone else have those feelings and experience that life changing moment; that's why I want to be a surrogate, that's why I am doing it.

Some might wonder how I could give up a baby that I've carried for 9 months? Won't I feel like it's my baby? Gestational surrogates are not genetically related to the baby. The embryos are created by the parents and/or donors and then transferred to the surrogate via IVF. So, no, I won't feel like it's my baby because it's not my baby. I won't be giving the baby up; I'll be giving the baby back. Will I love the baby? Yes! The same way that I love my friends' babies and my nieces and nephews. I love them, I love hearing how they are doing, I love visiting them - but I certainly don't want to keep them!



I am not motivated, nor do I need the money paid for my services as a surrogate. I am performing a service from the heart and my motivation is altruistic in nature. I will be paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature, you are still paid for your time and service despite your altruistic motivation.

I am not being repressed or taken advantage of. My intended parents could not have a child without my help and I sincerely want to help them, just as I would have wanted someone to help me if I hadn't been able to have children. I am an intelligent, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of a surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision of whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

When I began my surrogacy journey, I did an enormous amount of research, I discussed it with my OB, and I met with multiple surrogacy agencies and reproductive endocrinologists. I completed a psychological and medical evaluation. Based on my research and results, I chose to move forward. I feel very competent in my ability to make this choice. I do not need the government to "protect me from myself". I take great offense to the thinking that I am not capable of educating myself and making my own choices and decisions.

I view surrogacy as one of many family building options for the millions of men and women who want to have children but can't. Having children is a fundamental life function and anyone struggling with the disease of infertility or childlessness should have options as to how they build their family, just as I did and just as most of you did. Families choosing surrogacy have often gone to incredible lengths and many have endured so much heartache on their path to parenthood. All to have a family; to love their child. Infertility is not going away; surrogacy is not going away. Therefore, it is important to have legislation in place that protects those involved. As a legislator, I know that you work to protect your constituents. Reasonable regulations surrounding surrogacy is the best way to protect intended parents, surrogates, as well as the children involved. I strongly believe that gestational surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process in MN and I urge the commission to make that recommendation.

If you have any questions or would like to speak with me further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sarah Irons

7/25/2016

Elizabeth Johnson-Knapp

6909 Xerxes Ave S

Richfield, MN 55423

Senators – Linda Slocum, Melissa Halvorson

To whom it may concern,

My name is Elizabeth Johnson-Knapp. I am 34 years old. I live in a comfortable house that I own with my husband and my two delightful little boys. We are a happy, educated, middle-class family. My children attend a beautiful Montessori school. Both my husband and I work at Capella University full-time, and have worked there for eleven and nine years respectively. We both hold bachelor's degrees and we both have completed some graduate work as well. Our family income is over \$100,000 a year. I am in no way vulnerable; I am a psychologically healthy and empowered woman.

I started thinking about surrogacy when a close friend had a very hard pregnancy and wasn't sure she would be cleared by doctors to have a second child. She asked me hypothetically if I could consider carrying a child for her. She never ended up needing that help, but my husband and I started to think and talk about it, and became excited about the idea.

I started talking with a surrogacy agency out-of-state, but then a work friend introduced us to a couple who was looking for a surrogate. They were a lot like us: a middle-class couple, who loved the outdoors and were excited to start a family of their own. We met, and I saw them interact with my own children and *knew* they were meant to be parents. It started out as me just explaining what I had learned to help them find a surrogate, but we connected and I decided to work directly with this couple rather than through an agency for people I had not met. Through navigating the process, we discovered how difficult contracts and insurance precautions were without the help of an agency, and turned to a local agency to help with all of these aspects.

The contract we had did give me some compensation. To put it into perspective, this process took three years. It involved planning, legal discussion, three trips to out-of-state surrogacy clinics, daily injections and other medication, blood draws, ultrasounds, a full term pregnancy with twins, a C-section, and pumping breast milk for the babies for six months. I made around \$8,000/year for the surrogacy process. I make \$48,000 a year in my professional line of work. If I was truly motivated by financial gain only, I would have found a second job, which would have easily paid more for my time.

I looked at the surrogacy as a beautiful experience, and put aside the extra funds from the process in a special account that I intend to use for graduate school. I did not, however, need the money. It was appropriate compensation for the time and risk that I took. The contracts and compensation made it possible for me to undergo this risk – even with my own family commitments. It in no way treated my life or the babies' life as a commodity. The parents were excited to bring life into the world, and wanted that life so much. They simply needed way to make it happen. Surrogacy made it possible.

One of my favorite parts of the surrogacy process was the birth. I was pregnant with twins, and had never had a C-section before - or any surgery for that matter. I have to admit, I was nervous. But after the babies were born, I was wheeled into a recovery room with the new parents and babies. It felt AMAZING to watch a new family bond in that way. It was emotional and wonderful. I had always known that these would be two of the best parents in the world, and in that moment, I could see just how wonderful a family I had helped create. Those twins will have a beautiful future, and will help shape the world of tomorrow. They have such a loving family, and they were so wanted, that I know their future will be bright and full of love too.

I never had any desire or hope to have a relationship with the twins. I never once thought of them as mine. I only carried them as a gift to a family that I knew was meant to have children. Since starting the process, however, we have become close to the family. My husband and I are even godparents to the twins now, who were just baptized last weekend. In helping another family grow, we actually grew our own as well. We feel blessed. We are blessed.

I hope you will consider the blessing this has been to us when you look at other families wanting to participate in the same process.

In deepest sincerity,

Elizabeth Johnson-Knapp



July 18, 2016

Sarah M. Kemper  
4507 Avon Lane NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
[skemper07@gmail.com](mailto:skemper07@gmail.com)  
507-216-5345  
State Senators: David Senjem  
State representatives: Kim Norton

To whom it may Concern,

Today I am writing to you to share my wonderful personal experience as a gestational surrogate. There are many people that misrepresent surrogacy and claim that it is harmful and should be banned. Opponents are alleging that all surrogates are poor, uneducated, repressed, manipulated women who cannot make good decisions for themselves. I believe surrogacy is an amazing way for families to expand their family. Please allow me to share my personal story.

My name is Sarah M. Kemper and I am 34 years old. I have been happily married for almost nine years and a mother of two amazing daughters. I have a strong personal faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Due to my faith in Christ I strongly believe that all lives have value, both born and unborn. I have a Bachelors of Science degree in Nursing and have practiced nursing for 10 years before deciding to stay at home full time to be with my children. Our family is considered middle class with a yearly income in the range of \$60,000-\$80,000. After my youngest daughter was born I had a strong desire to help a couple who was struggling with infertility.

This desire to help another couple led me to search out option to become a surrogate. As an educated woman I spent many hours doing my own research about this process and determined that this was something I wanted to pursue. In order to become a surrogate, I received medical clearance from my physician and went through various other screenings. I sought my own independent legal counsel to complete an agreement between myself and the intended parents. Going into my journey as a surrogate, I never viewed the child I would carry (and eventually carried) for the intended parents as "my child." I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents' child, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once they were born. It was natural and simply the way it should be.

I am blessed to have delivered twin girls to an amazing couple in 2015. This family is so grateful to have been given the chance to expand their family through surrogacy.

I want to make a few things absolutely clear about myself and my views of surrogacy. I am an educated woman who can make her own decisions. My family was financially stable prior to becoming a surrogate and I did not become a surrogate because of money. As I previously mentioned, my motivation was to help another couple bring a child into their life. Opponents of surrogacy state that surrogates sell their baby, but this is not the case. The children I carried in-utero were always the intended parents, so I viewed surrogacy as

babysitting the intended parents' child during the gestational period, knowing full well that the child belongs to the intended parent, not myself as the surrogate. I am fully capable of making my own informed decisions regarding surrogacy and I do not feel the government should take away my right to become a surrogate to help a couple bring a child into their lives.

Bringing twin girls into this world for the intended parents was a wonderful and fulfilling experience for me. I have been truly blessed to have been given the opportunity to be a surrogate and hope to do it again.

Sincerely,

Sarah M. Kemper

Brooke Kimbrough

**4 Sisters Surrogacy Agency**

[www.4sistersurrogacy.com](http://www.4sistersurrogacy.com)

[Facebook](#)

[Pinterest](#)

[Instagram](#)

916.242.5268 business

818.919.2434 cell

My name is Brooke Kimbrough and I am a momma of 4 and a surrogate of one sweet little girl named Olivia. While sitting at lunch last week with her and her father, Patrick, I was overcome with joy. I couldn't stop thinking about the immense amount of pleasure I still take in being able to provide Patrick and Olivia the opportunity to share such an incredible bond. Olivia's smile is his smile. Her sassy attitude and giggles when she passes a mirror bring Patrick to his knees. At almost a year of age, Olivia has her Daddy right where she wants him.

I know what that joy feels like. After graduating college, I had four children of my own, one step-daughter who came as the best bonus ever when marrying my husband and three biological kiddos. Each one brought a sense of fulfillment and pure love that could not be described adequately to anyone who had not experienced it. They had my heart, my soul and are, to this day, my everything. When we had completed our family, one of my best friends and his husband were considering starting their family. They are a same sex male couple so, for obvious reasons, weren't able to carry for themselves. I offered to carry for them. While they were overcome with gratitude and tears were shed, ultimately, they decided to put their family on hold temporarily and to continue on their career paths for a few more years.

I still felt this connection to surrogacy. I wanted to help someone and I knew that my body was gifted this remarkable talent. I knew that I could safely carry a baby when other's could not. I need to be a surrogate. I wanted to be a surrogate. I just didn't know where to start.

My parents, both Family Law attorneys in Los Angeles, suggested I start with a family friend who is an Adoption Attorney. We discussed it and he sent me to an agency he trusted. From there, I was medically screened, interviewed, background checked and met with my case worker in my home. My husband and children met with her. We discussed surrogacy as a family and how much it was going to help someone. My children were inquisitive and excited, impatient and thoughtful.

Patrick and I were matched and we became friends. Over the course of 12 months, an organic relationship developed. We attended doctor's appointments and educational seminars. We did lunch and shopped for the baby. I found out the gender, he did not. He met my friends and I met his. Our families grew and we both felt stronger, happier and more excited than ever.

When Olivia was born via c-section, Patrick was there holding my hand as they cut open my belly and handed him his daughter. As my husband replaced Patrick's hand with his own, a single tear fell onto my forehead as Patrick was handed his brand new, 6 pound baby girl. His life was forever changed, and so was ours.

Surrogacy is one of the most rewarding, generous and thoughtful gifts I have ever received. Patrick gifted me with a life long friendship, an experience that allowed my family to grow closer and an incredible sense of pride when I think about a little girl who could have never been without surrogacy.

Sincerely,

Brooke Kimbrough

Nicole Alison Kreisman  
N9621 Clover Ridge Trl, Appleton, Wisconsin 54915  
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920-903-4729  
Wisconsin State Senators: Ron Johnson (R) and Tammy Baldwin (D)

July 15, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am 28 years old mother of two young children, who chooses to work outside of the home as a project engineer and manager. I have received my Bachelors of Science in Construction Management with a minor in business. I am not uneducated and am perfectly capable of assessing the risks of a surrogate pregnancy. After years research I made the informed decision to become a surrogate. This decision was made to assist a couple receive the irreplaceable joys that children bring. Just because a couple cannot become pregnant "the old fashion way" or because a couple is gay does not mean they should not be able to enter a mutually agreed upon agreement for surrogacy.

One of the biggest decisions of becoming a surrogate was knowing that I would go through a number of physical and mental screens before ever being matched with intended parents or transfer their children. The screening covers many different aspects of the process and continuously checks for signs that a surrogate may not be the right candidate. After all the screening I was competent to make my own decision. I did not need and still do not need the government to intrude on my right to make this decision for myself and my family.

Pregnancy is a natural process and women's bodies are made to carry children. I have been fortunate enough to be able to do so easily and no physical consequences have arisen and I am perfectly capable to carry another child when I decide to.

Our household is not poor or economically vulnerable, yet I chose to carry children for other families. I have never been motivated by the money paid. My gross income is around \$43,000/year and as a household we earn over \$80,000 and have no debt. I performed this service from the heart for the intended parents. I was paid for my services, for the reasonable amount of time, obligations and expenses during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. No different than an adoption agent taking home her salary after placing children in forever homes.

There is an argument that surrogacy is selling *my* baby. Surrogacy is not selling "my" babies to the intended parents. The children are being returned to their parents after the babies are placed temporarily in my custody to gestate for them, because for one reason or another they cannot carry themselves. The temporarily custody I had of the children was only given to me after the full understanding that I would return their children to them once I have completed my part.



The children I gestated for the intended parents were never “mine”. They were always the intended parents. From day one I have always known and accepted that and I have had no negative psychological consequences or reservations about giving them their child. The joy of seeing the intended parents hear the first heartbeat, seeing the first ultrasound of their child and untimely holding their children in the delivery room and after cannot be replaced. I know I did the right thing for carrying these children and their parents are forever grateful.

With all the information available today I hope you understand that surrogacy is being misrepresented and is not for economically and emotionally vulnerable as some claim. As long as surrogacy is kept as a protected and reasonably regulated process there is no reason to oppose legally recognizing commercial gestation surrogacy contracts.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Kreisman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole Kreisman

Shawnee Krueger  
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612-804-6764  
[thesailorsgirl@mac.com](mailto:thesailorsgirl@mac.com)

Representative Rick Hansen

Dear sir,

A couple of months ago I met with you and discussed the role I had as a gestational surrogate. As we discussed in April, there is a group of people in Minnesota who oppose surrogacy. While it certainly is their right not to agree with surrogacy, they are also misinformed about many aspects of what surrogacy is and how it is carried out in Minnesota. They are attempting to outlaw surrogacy based on a few cases and their own biases, rather than on the facts and the many successes.

Opponents of surrogacy will tell you that a typical surrogate is poor, uneducated, repressed, easily coerced, and an easily manipulated woman who can't make decisions for herself.

Please let me assure you, this is NOT the case of the majority of surrogates. I speak not only of myself, but of my many friends who chose to be a surrogate for another family. I, like most surrogates, graduated from college, have a supportive family, hold down respectable and well-paying jobs. I have lived in South St Paul for almost 10 years, and have been a resident of Minnesota my entire life. My husband and I are Christians who attend a local Lutheran church. I am not affiliated with any political party, yet am a registered voter who does vote in local, state, and national elections. Surrogates in Minnesota are intelligent, caring women who chose to give of their time, energy, and yes, their bodies in order for others to experience what a joy it is to have a child.

You are a parent of a healthy boy. I know you understand what pride it is to see him succeed and know that he is your own flesh and blood. As a surrogate, that is all I wanted to do as well. To provide a couple with the opportunity to have that joy, feel the pride as their own child succeeds.

I watched a very dear friend of mine go through years of infertility treatments and finally, when she did become pregnant, to miscarry. This event shook her and her husband. To experience the joy and anticipation of finally being pregnant with a baby, to then have to deliver and bury a child is something I pray I never have to do. It was during that time of her tragedy that I told my husband that I needed to help someone who can't have a child naturally have a bit of the blessings he and I have with our children.

Two years ago I had the privilege of carrying twin boys for a couple who could not have children without my help. The couple I worked with are a wonderful couple with similar beliefs as I. It was amazing to me to be able to call the parents and let them know what was happening throughout the pregnancy. We enjoyed regular visits throughout the pregnancy, from meals to doctors visit and shopping together. At no time during the pregnancy did I have a second thought

about keeping the babies. I love being pregnant and I love children, but I was so excited to see the Intended Parents with their babies. I wanted to be able to give them this gift of a child. To return to them their healthy children they entrusted to me to birth is wonderful. I feel honored that another couple trusted me with such a precious gift, and I was pleased to see their trust fulfilled.

I had absolutely no desire to keep the babies upon birth. I love visiting them as friends, and with their consent and blessing, have a very close relationship with their family, but I have no attachment with the children, except that as a friend of the family. There was no difficulty seeing the new family with their babies, after all that is the intention of surrogacy all along. My family is complete, it is now time for me to help create another family.

I was given the opportunity to meet with a psychologist prior to carrying for the family. The psychologist, my husband and I talked through the process, from the daily shots, to the transfer, and finally the delivery. We talked about giving the baby to the parents and any other reservations I might have had. The psychologist recognized that I was willing and capable of carrying another couple's child within me and after my responsibilities of bringing the child to gestation, of relinquishing my duties over to the parents. Along with a psychologist, I was also medically screened by two licensed physicians, and completed a background check. I met with a lawyer of my choosing to review the contract between the intended parents and I. I had my own insurance through my employer, which was used, and at no time did I receive any form of government assistance while I was a gestational surrogate. Yes, there was a contract in place. I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the surrogacy process. Money is not nor has ever been a deciding factor for me. My husband and I support ourselves through our education and with good jobs here in Minnesota.

Please understand that I, and the many surrogates that I call friends, do not take gestational surrogacy as a business transaction. There is no buying and selling of children. We are not renting out our uteruses. We all treat human life in the highest regard. We rejoice when one of our surrogate sisters becomes pregnant, and we mourn when the treatments fail.

I am not a surrogate right now, however, I would love to carry another child for a couple and help create or finish a family if I am able. The feeling of knowing you provided a gift, a child, to another is one I am so very proud of. There was and is no remorse, nothing negative happened to me or my family because of me being a gestational surrogate. I know that not everyone could or should be a surrogate. There needs to be psychological screenings, background checks, medical checks performed, and contracts in place for the safety of the surrogate, the parents, and the babies. Education of the surrogate and the intended parents regarding the process needs to happen before anything takes place. There needs to be laws in place to reasonably regulate the process to minimize any unfortunate experiences. I, as a gestational surrogate who knows firsthand the trials and ultimately the joys of surrogacy, ask you to be a part of making surrogacy protected and put reasonable regulations in place. Please join me in making this recommendation in support of gestational surrogacy here in Minnesota.

Thank you for your support,

Shawnee Krueger

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#### Representatives

Abigail Whelan  
Al Franken  
Amy Klobuchar

I decided to become a Surrogate just a few months ago. It was not something I had given much thought to before I met Marion & Chad, this extraordinary couple who had been trying to conceive for 9 years. Marion and I happened to be seated next to one another at a work conference- and we were instant friends. We are close in age, work in the same industry and had similar interests. Her husband Chad was there as well and I inquired if they had any children. While remaining very neutral, she gave a quick run down of their struggle: 9 years of infertility, 6 failed IVF cycles, 2 Egg Donor Cycles, a Surrogacy that ended tragically when the Surrogate was 7 months along. "We're going to keep trying!" she chirped optimistically. While she seemed to accept her situation with a calm grace, I saw that facade fall away rather quickly a few hours later. My heart ached to see this amazing couple: funny, caring, crazy about each other and so desperate to become parents.

A few days later, while playing with my little girls- I had one of those moments where you fully appreciate how extraordinarily lucky you are. My thoughts wandered to Marion, and I knew in that moment that I wanted to be her Surrogate. I wanted to help Marion and Chad - simply because I could. I had full term, uncomplicated pregnancies that I thoroughly enjoyed (heartburn and nausea aside). My deliveries were fast and easy. My body can do things that hers cannot and, if the tables were flipped, I certainly hope there would be someone out there willing to help me.

My excitement grew as I really started to consider how this would play out. I started to envision her reaction to a positive pregnancy test, imagined the joy they would experience when they hear their baby's heartbeat for the first time, pictured how it would be for her and Chad in the delivery room when she has the chance to have first skin on skin with her baby after delivery. As I am thinking of all of the wonderful experiences we could have together, I was also remembering the extreme nausea I was plagued with throughout my pregnancies. The heartburn that I was certain would be the death of me. The dislocated ribs towards the end of both pregnancies! The nerves I had with each delivery - praying that everything would go smoothly and entrusting myself to some higher power that at the end of the delivery- both my baby and I would be happy and healthy. These were things that I fretted over with my pregnancies and understood I would share those concerns with Marion if I carried her child. Other thoughts snuck in there as well: I had just lost the last of my baby weight, I wouldn't be able to enjoy a glass of wine in the evenings. I thought about how happy I was to deal with those small inconveniences when I was pregnant with my own... and how Marion would happily accept these challenges if she were physically able to carry her baby.

I was close to crying by the time I emailed her.

She called me right away. She and her husband had just entered into another agreement with their surrogate and had a transfer date set - and laughed when she asked me if I would consider carrying a

sibling (assuming her transfer was successful). Technically, I was off the hook. I was surprisingly disappointed. I couldn't stop thinking about it and now I am looking at matching with a couple that I feel the same kind of connection with.

My husband and I have had to make hard decisions in our 10 years together. This was not one of them. Jay thought I was a bit crazy - but he knows how passionate I am about this decision and fully supports me. He is the only person I feel I would need to get approval from to proceed. It is my body, it is my life, it is my strong desire to do this beautiful thing for another person. The only person I feel would have a right to tell me that I could not proceed would be if a medical professional found me lacking during my medical, psychological and social screening.

I graduated from St Olaf College in Northfield with a Bachelor's in English & Communications. I have every intention of going back to school once my youngest is in kindergarten. I am a successful entrepreneur, a fantastic mom, and I like to think I am a pretty empathetic person. My husband and I are both financially stable. I'm self employed - earning an annual income around \$50k WHILE staying home with my 1 & 3 year olds. Our household income is around \$200 a year. I'm not doing this for the financial gain. I want to do this - to be part of a miracle in another person's life.

There are many moving parts to this process. The screening application process for a Surrogate is extensive. We explore their motivations, current household environment, spousal/ family support system and their finances. We have medical screening, psychological screening, personality testing and home visits with social workers. When proper protocol is followed, the Surrogate proceeds with a match after she has been thoroughly informed and vetted. With the proper regulation, we can keep this experience a positive one that protects all parties.

Surrogacy should remain a protected process that is available in MN, to both heterosexual couples struggling with infertility, and as a path to parenthood for our same sex couples who require a Surrogate in order to have a biological child.

## Jennifer Leuer

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(651) 808.3634 jennifer.leuer@yahoo.com

July 18, 2016

Dear,

Mr. Keith Ellison (D), Mr. Erik Paulson (R), Mr. Rick Nolan (D), Mr. Collin Peterson (D), Mr. Tim Walz (D), Ms. Betty McCollum (D), Mr. John Kline (R), Mr. Tom Emmer (R)  
Senator Amy Klobuchar (D), Senator Al Franken (D,)

I am happy to have the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Jennifer Leuer, age 35, Caucasian, a married mother to three children, ages 11, 5, and 3. Our children attend a private grade school. I am a full time employee for ten years with the same company, having worked nine years in upper management for a national Jewelry chain. Our family income is \$95,000 dollars per year. I have a high school diploma, and a B.A from the Saint Mary's University, Winona, MN. I am also a current student at Saint Paul College, beginning another journey in education studying American Sign Language (ASL), my goal is to be an interpreter. I was raised Catholic, and continue to practice my faith with my family.

I had a desire for many years to be a gestational surrogate, as I had several groups of friends who had difficulty getting pregnant and carrying to term, and also friends who could not get pregnant at all. It breaks my heart now, and during those times to see their desire to be parents fail, and hope leave their eyes. As a woman who wanted to get pregnant and did, carried successfully, and has the joy of raising my children, it saddens me to know they have come to terms that this too cannot be their reality. We often take for granted the joy of snuggling our children, reading them stories, and watching them grow into the amazing people they will become. Some women have to watch from a far, or across the room, dreaming of what that might have been like for them.

In the fall of 2014, I decided I wanted to move forward in becoming a surrogate. I discussed it with my husband and a couple close friends, and had their support from the start. I have since been matched with a family since June 2015 as their gestational surrogate. When I

applied for the opportunity to be a part of the gestational surrogacy world, I hoped that someone would like my profile, and then trust me with keeping their baby safe for 40 weeks! At first it seemed like a shot in the dark, as there were some things I just couldn't agree to under any circumstances, and the coordinator told me it may take some time based on my limitations. Three months later; I got the call, there's a match, a profile is on the way to you and if you would like to connect with this family we will set up a matching call! Whoa, it was happening! I wasn't sure what to expect from the parents-to-be on the other end of that call that morning, but I knew myself well enough to know that I would know right away if this was a good match. Once we were on the phone with each other we were asked many questions about ourselves, how we eat, exercise, hobbies, limitations, travel, current living situations, past pregnancies and deliveries, what we would be open to today, during pregnancy and after. So many questions, and it was great! I felt like I had a good understanding of the couple I was soon to be partnered with on this journey. Then came the paper work, the medical appointments, including couple and group couple psychologists, lawyers and details. It was a lot to take in, but this isn't a situation to be taken lightly, people's hopes and dreams, lives and time are at stake here, and none of us wanted to miss even the smallest of details.

Once all the paper work was complete, and contracts signed, the scheduling for a transfer began. After a few weeks of medication, ultrasounds and checking in we were all set to go. The transfer was completed and ten days later we were confirmed pregnant! Everyone was thrilled, and rightfully so. In two weeks we would have an ultrasound for heartbeat and size, and in July we would have a baby! Ultrasound day came, and the Intended Mother and I met at the clinic, only to be told there was no heartbeat. Clear signs that something had started to develop and then stopped. It was devastating. I was in a room, with a woman I had only known a few months, pregnant (and feeling pregnant) with her sweet baby, and there was nothing there. Her heartbreak was now my heartbreak, a glimpse into the world of let-down, that she has been experiencing over and over again. We left the clinic quietly, in disbelief, and assured one another we would be in contact by the end of the day. On my drive home, crying and trying to understand why this wasn't meant to be, I realized that my heart was far more invested than I had realized, and I wanted this baby for them so much. How can we make this happen? How can I help their dreams come true? Nine months after the miscarriage we are still working towards achieving this goal. I am so

thrilled to still be able to give this amazing couple the chance to be parents to this beautiful baby! I know the moment I see them hold their child it will be, without question, one of the most amazing moments of my life!

I am not poor.

I am not uneducated.

I am not being repressed or taken advantage of by the “wealthy” to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have a child without my help, and I sincerely, and appropriately wanted to help them and give them that gift. My intended parents are remarkable people for many reasons, and their economic status is irrelevant to me.

I am not primarily motivated by, nor do I necessarily need, the money paid for my services.

I did not get paid for a baby; I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I DO NOT need the government to intrude on my PERSONAL RIGHT to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman. I do not view their child, whom I gestated, as “my child.” This child is not mine; I have had my own children. It is my sole desire to help the intended parents grow their family, and it gives me great joy to be a part of this amazing gift.

I believe in surrogacy. I believe it is a decision I can make for myself. I believe that anyone who desires to help build a family through surrogacy, with the proper support, and guidelines in place to support both the families and the surrogate, should have the right to investigate and proceed with that option.



Thank you for your time in reading my letter. I hope you will find it in your hearts to give the gift of life to every family.

Warm regards,

Jennifer Leuer

Samantha Levine  
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Denny McNamara (R)  
MN House- 54B

Katie Sieben (DFL)  
MN Senate- 54

I am Samantha Levine. I am 29 years old, a wife, a mother of four daughters Elli, Olivia, Avery and Adelyn, currently pregnant with our fifth child. I am a full time working mom, a traditional surrogate mother to Charlie, and so much more.

I come to you with a real story of successful traditional surrogacy. Tammy, Charlie's mother, had asked if I could write a letter for the book she was making for her daughter. The story of Charlie began way before she was even born. I want to share with you what I wrote for that story- The same way the surrogate child I brought into this world will hear it.

"I'm not quite sure where to start Darling, but here's to looking at you kid! I am your Auntie Sammy and I was blessed with a healthy body to carry you in. Your mom has told you most of our story together. I think I might take you back a few years to give you a little insight into me. I come from a large and loving family. I am the oldest of five children. Having grown up with all my siblings, I knew from an early age I wanted to be a mom.

When I was 17 years old I graduated early from high school and attended a school for skin care. During my time at this school I became close to a woman who was having troubles carrying a child. I became close to her and her husband. At some point I offered to carry their child for them. Just days before I offered, they had been approved to adopt a child. They continued with the adoption and brought home their beautiful little girl. We talked about going through with the surrogacy in the next few years. But tragedy struck their family and her husband passed away.

I knew in my heart I would still someday love to help complete a family. As a surrogate, I could make a family's dreams come true.

When Uncle Ryan and I started dating, I told him of my desire to be a surrogate. He said he understood and admired my need to fulfill this strong aspiration. Uncle Ryan told me in later years that he was more drawn to me, because he found my want of being a surrogate such high act of unselfishness.

As your mom told you, once we met there was really no doubt that we were brought together for a reason. And yes Dear, that reason was you! So after your mother's egg ceased development we were all crushed. Your mom told me she was done. She couldn't handle any more pain. It hit me much harder than I expected. Days went by and I just couldn't let it go. I felt I couldn't move on yet. I prayed and prayed for an answer. I kept saying, "I wish there was more I could do. I would do anything to be able to give her this baby." At that point I felt this overwhelming desire to do more. I wasn't quite sure how Uncle Ryan or your mom would feel about me donating an egg. Uncle Ryan and I prayed together and spent a few nights discussing it and knew that it felt right. I was so nervous to offer my egg to your mom out of fear that it might make her pain deeper. I sent her a text just asking if we could talk. I knew she had said she was done but I needed to be sure. Uncle Ryan and I had put off having more of our own children for this process. We knew if we moved on it would only be a short time until I was carrying our fifth child. I was afraid your mom would change her mind and it could have been too late. She can tell you how well we know each other ;- ) she knew exactly what I wanted to talk to her about. And here we are.

This journey has not always been easy. I knew we had nothing to worry about, though. We were all so determined to bring you into this world! You are such a blessed child. I have had amazing support from not only Uncle Ryan and many close family and friends but also our four daughters. I know you won't remember... But while I carried you our girls talked to you, have told you stories, sang to you, and even tried to tickle you! They love babies and can't wait to meet you! Avery tells everyone, everywhere we go that her mommy (me) is carrying a baby for her friend Tammy and the baby's name is Charlie! She is so proud!

I think the only difficult part of this for me is that I couldn't help your mom feel more during the pregnancy.

I see the sadness in her eyes at times. She would have given anything to feel you inside of her. I wish there was more I could have done. You have just been such an easy pregnancy that there wasn't much to tell her most of the time. But this past weekend I got to spend the night with your mom. She finally had a chance to really see you in action! It was so amazing!

You are on your way in a few short days now! I feel so blessed to have been able to take care of you for these past 10 months and even more blessed to deliver you to your mom and dad soon! I get to be a part of completing your family, and I feel honored and blessed to be part of you entering this world!

Love you lots, Auntie Sammy! ”

I was raised in a household which never had to do without. I have parents who believe their children should learn accountability and be responsible for their behavior. From a young age, my parents encouraged me to be an assertive individual. They taught me to take initiative in my education and take and accountability for my actions in life. I have earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology and currently have a very satisfying and rewarding full time job helping others. My

husband is an educated man and has established a successful career. He is able to provide our family with a comfortable lifestyle and secure future.

I did not get paid for a baby; I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).

I have always known and accepted that Charlie was the intended parents' child, and I have had no adverse physical or psychological consequence, or any reservations, about giving the intended parents their child once it was born. Initially, it was my intentions to remove myself from any physical or emotional interaction with Charlie for the first month after delivery. However, by the next day I felt completely content in my actions and discovered I had no issues holding this beautiful blessing which all parties lovingly brought into this world.

As we are expecting our fifth child in November, my aspiration is to have a healthy loving family of 6 children of our own. At this point, seeing our own family is doing well, I still do have the desire to participate in one more surrogacy. Please, do not take this right way from me. Do not take away the hope from a loving couple who desire so much to be parents.

August 13<sup>th</sup> is just around the corner and Charlie will be celebrating her first birthday. Without traditional surrogacy Charlie would not be here and there would be no celebration.

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Representatives:

Amy Klobuchar, U.S. Senate

Al Franken, U.S. Senate

David J. Tomassoni, MN Senate

My name is Brittany Lindseth. I am 34 years old and I live in Britt, MN, a rural area just over an hour north of Duluth, MN. I grew up in Britt and went to school in Virginia, MN. I am married and my husband and I have two sons, ages 5 and 7. We spend most of our time outdoors and at our cabin on Lake Vermilion.

I have 2 Associates degrees and I am continuing my education online for my Bachelors of Business degree. (in my free time – ha ha!) I work as a secretary for the Virginia School District and part time as a bookkeeper. My husband also went to college and now works at U.S. Steel. We gross around \$100,000 a year. My grandparents and parents also grew up in the same area and my grandfather built a motel in the 1950's and my family and I still run it.

I first thought about surrogacy when my sisters and I were younger. We promised that if one of us couldn't carry a child, we would be surrogates for each other. We were all blessed to not have fertility issues. Then, in the summer of 2013, I thought about surrogacy again. I have carried 2 babies to full term and had no problems – I could do this for someone else! I worked full time with both of my children and I knew that I could do the same while carrying a child for someone else. I found an agency online and was pleased to see they were based in Minnesota. I spoke to a wonderful employee who had also been a surrogate and I knew INSTANTLY I would be a gestational surrogate.

After the agency's very thorough screening process, I was matched with a family who had been struggling with infertility for 32 years!!! They were sweet and kind and extremely apprehensive. They were so afraid to get their hopes up that they would actually have a baby through me. Yet they were so kind and we stayed in contact constantly throughout my pregnancy.

My family was apprehensive. They were afraid for my health, physically and mentally, but I had absolutely no negative physical, emotional, or psychological effects. They were so supportive and came to appointments with me. My husband was wonderful and supportive also. We spoke openly to our children, who were 3 and 5 at the time. They both understood that mom had babies in her belly that were not their sisters. They were a present for another family. They even explained it to their daycare and school classmates.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, I gave birth to TWIN girls for this amazing family. My heart was so utterly full at the sight of my Intended Parents meeting their daughters for the first time. My family was there to meet the twins and their Parents. It was awesome. I knew at that moment I would do this again for another family.

During my surrogacy I was asked many times, "How can you just give up babies that you carried?" I answered every time with the same answer, "They aren't 'mine'." It was that simple. I went into surrogacy fully comprehending that I was "just" a vessel. After giving birth I felt the same.

I remember when I was alone in my hospital room for the first time after giving birth. I went and took a shower and during the shower I thought, if I am going to be upset or sad, this was my private time to let it out. But I felt elated! I had just given LIFE to 2 humans. I had just given a family a gift that was priceless. I had only tears of joy to shed in the shower that day.

I am currently in the process of being a surrogate for another family. I have been matched with another wonderful couple that has been struggling with infertility for over 10 years. We did not have a successful transfer the first time. But the Intended family and my family are keeping our hopes up that a 2<sup>nd</sup> transfer will result in a baby or two! It's been a rollercoaster of emotions, but it's worth it.

I feel so blessed to be able to go through another surrogate journey. I am a giving person and surrogacy is my way of assisting a family in need and also helping my life become even more gratifying than it already has been. For a group of people to tell me that I should not help a family bring a child into the world is completely upsetting. Surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process in Minnesota, not completely banned. If you saw the joy and heard the gratitude in the voices of the parents of the twins I carried – you would understand that surrogacy is a much needed and a wonderful process.

Thank you for your time,

Brittany M. Lindseth

Julie Anne Longshore  
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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to inform you that I am a Gestational Surrogate. I am neither Economically nor Emotionally vulnerable. I am well educated and have a good paying job with lots of benefits that support me in my desire to be a gestational surrogate. I have held many jobs in the public sector with Hennepin County and all the different supervisors have supported me in these journeys. My job pays me a livable salary with many benefits including health and dental insurance and sick and vacation time. I am not motivated to be a gestational surrogate because of the financial benefit to myself and my family. I was not paid for the baby I carried, I was paid for my time being pregnant and taking care of myself during the pregnancy so a healthy baby could be born and the Intended Parents could bring home a child to raise as their own. This is no different than being paid for my primary job, I am paid to show up to work and produce quality product and am paid for my services to do that, just as you are to do your work in Legislature. The baby was not my genetics, therefore was not mine to "sell", but the Intended Parent's biological child to bring home and love as they would any child born of their own womb. I was blessed to be able to carry a child for another couple and teach my own children about compassion as they learned to help others by my own unselfishness and giving to others in a very special way. I have never thought of any child I have or will carry as "my child", but one I was trusted to carry until he/she was healthy enough to be born and to be returned to his/her parents. I suffered no adverse physical or psychological consequences or reservations when returning said child to their parents once born. I have 3 children of my own and when each of them was delivered I knew instantly they were mine, they looked like me and I felt an immediate connection with them. When I delivered each of the 4 children as a gestational surrogate I knew they were not mine, I felt no attachment to them like I did my own. They did not look like me and to see the joy and love that the parents had when they first held their child was priceless and a feeling I had with my own. All of these children grew under my heart, in my uterus, delivered safely and healthy and yet the children made for others to take home and raise are just as amazing creatures as the ones I got to bring home to love.

The parents of the children I carried for have been gracious to allow me to continue to be a part of their lives, I get updates and pictures and we talk as friends do about our kids. I am as proud of these kids as I am of any of my friends kids, I am not missing out on anything by not having them here to raise as my own, they are not mine to raise.

I hope to be able to carry again in this wonderful state of Minnesota for another couple who is unable to safely carry a pregnancy and I hope that the legislation of this great state will be supportive of me in that journey. It is an amazing gift to be able to be a part of and I hope that should you or any member of your family have difficulty to conceive you will be able to trust the services of a Gestational Carrier in the state of Minnesota with a supportive legislature by your side.

Sincerely,



Julie A Longshore

July 16, 2016

Courtney Madsen  
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July 16, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Courtney Madsen, and I am a 34 year old woman living in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am married with three kids, 7 year old twins and a 3 year old. I am currently a sales consultant for an international nail care company but previously worked in the orthotics/prosthetics profession for seven years. I have a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology and a master's degree in Biomechanics, as well as additional schooling in orthotics and prosthetics. My husband earned his medical degree and is a practicing Medical Examiner for the state of Minnesota. We have lived a wonderful life in Saint Paul for the past six years, building a community of friends and peers we truly enjoy based on our neighborhood, careers, our children's Montessori school, and our interests in running and enjoying good food!

I've had aspirations to be a surrogate even before my own family was complete. I am very close with my twin sister and older sister, and I always knew if they needed my help due to fertility issues I would absolutely be there. However, my sisters completed their families, as did my close friends I would have loved to help. Therefore, after we had our third child, I decided to apply to be a surrogate with an agency here in Minnesota.

The process of becoming a surrogate is neither easy nor fast. I first had an informational phone interview with the agency, and then I filled out a paper application. I had a physical screening with my OBGYN and a psychological evaluation with a therapist specializing in fertility. The biography I provided in my paper application was made available to intended parents seeking a gestational surrogate. One couple was interested in me right away, and a mediated phone call between the agency, me, and the couple was scheduled. This was a two hour phone call where we discussed every topic in the application ranging from background information about myself and my family to my feelings on religion and abortion. After this phone call, I was given time to decide if this was the couple I would choose to join in this unique process, and they were also given time to think about working with me. Only when we came back to the agency mutually agreeing that we were both what each other was looking for, did we move forward with a contract.

The contract took over 6 weeks to finalize, and we each had our own lawyers working for us. The document was lengthy and full of legal terms that we all wanted clarification and understanding before signing anything. My lawyer even commented that my husband and I asked more questions than anyone else he had ever had in more than 20 years of helping surrogates.

Once everything was a go, I started communicating with the fertility clinic my intended parents chose. They had an anonymous egg donor, and I was to receive IVF of no more than two embryos in an attempt to carry twins for them. Even though I am healthy with no medical issues and we worked with the best doctors it took three rounds of IVF to become pregnant with one singleton. I am currently 27 weeks pregnant with a boy, their first child. I do not consider this child my own in any way. I consider this the couple's child, and I am simply gestating him until I can bring him into the world and into their arms. They are a same sex couple living in a Europe and this is the only way they can have children. To help



make a family for a couple who dreams of this and only has one option is exactly why I desired to become a gestational surrogate.

I have found this process so positive, and I feel that the intended parents and I were meant to work together. We have already formed what we know will be a lifelong friendship. The couple had hoped for twins so after finding out only one baby made the third transfer, we immediately all agreed that doing this a second time in the future was a strong possibility. I would absolutely do this again. I have NEVER for one minute felt coerced, used, or degraded. If anything, I have felt the exact opposite. I have felt loved, appreciated, and thanked. I am not getting paid for a baby. I am simply being compensated for my time, my family's time, services, obligations, and expenses that come with the process of becoming pregnant, carrying, and delivering the intended parent's pregnancy for them. I am a highly educated, independent woman who is capable of assessing the risks of a surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take on those risks. I do not believe it is the government's role to intrude on my right to make these decisions about my own body.

In closing, I ABSOLUTELY believe surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process in the state of Minnesota, and I implore the commission to recommend continuing to allow women the opportunity to be a surrogate in Minnesota.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Courtney Madsen

July 18, 2016

Dear Linda Runbeck and Roger Chamberlain,

My name Daniele Elizabeth Maggert. I live at 7728 Carole Drive, Lino Lakes, MN 55014. My email address is [Danielee2272@gmail.com](mailto:Danielee2272@gmail.com) and you can reach me at 612.205.3305. I am a woman, 33 years old, Caucasian, EDUCATED Gestational surrogate and want to help another family. I am not poor, my personal gross income is \$54K, and my family's income is over \$125K a year. I am not uneducated, I have completed my Associates and currently obtaining my Bachelors. I attend a Catholic Church.

I did not and I do not perceive the children I carried as my own. I did not sell "my" babies to the intended parents; I RETURNED the intended parents' babies to them after they temporarily placed them in my custody to gestate for them with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their children to them when I had completed my task. I never viewed the children I gestated for the intended parents as "my child;" I have always known and accepted that the children were the intended parents' children, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their children once it was born. It was natural and simply the way it should be.

I am not being repressed or taken advantage of by the "wealthy" to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help, and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status is irrelevant to me. My experience was amazing.

The process I felt was extremely sufficient in making sure that my needs were met and matched with the Intended Parents to make the match a success.

I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman. I feel that Surrogacy and Women who choose Surrogacy should be protected and regulated process in Minnesota. I urge the Commission to make that recommendation.

Best Regards,

Daniele M.

Lino Lakes, MN

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State Representatives: David Livingston and Phil Lovas  
State Senator: Judy Burges

July 13, 2016

Mr. Steven Snyder, Attorney at Law  
11270 86<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
Maple Grove, MN 55369

I am writing to you today to voice my support of surrogacy. I have been a gestational surrogate twice. I gave birth to the first baby in August 2012 and the second baby in September 2014. Being a surrogate has been one of the most amazing, rewarding, and fulfilling things I have done in my life. During my first journey as a surrogate, I grew to become very close to my intended parents. We entered our journey with the understanding that, although we all would have liked to grow close, we also understood that sometimes, that close bond does not come, and we were okay with that possibility. However, that was not the case for us. We came to love each other as close friends and to this day, we continue to remain in close contact.

I think that one of the things that helped to ensure that we had a great journey is that we were all fully screened. We all went through extensive medical testing, as well as psychological testing. We also had our own separate attorneys who were looking out for our best interests and ensured that we all knew exactly what we were agreeing to and that there were no unknown expectations from either side of the contract. The psychological testing made sure that we were all prepared for the journey on which we were about to embark, and all of these things helped to put our minds at ease and allow us to enjoy our journey.

Never, at any point during my journey, did I ever feel like the baby that I was carrying was mine. My son was 5 years old at the time of my first journey, and even he understood very well that the baby I was carrying was not ours to keep. He would regularly correct people in public that the baby was not ours. Their looks would then prompt him to tell people, "You know, she's a surrogate!", and then they would look at him quizzically again, and he would proclaim "\*laughs\* She is just the oven". What I found is that my 5-year old was more educated than most of the general public. But, even with the general public not understanding the process, or not understanding why I would want to go through a pregnancy knowing the whole time that I was not keeping the baby, when I was able to explain to them how amazing the experience was for me and my family, most people were simply in awe and so happy for all of us, including my intended parents. It was rare for me to encounter people who said things like, "But how can you give the baby up?" or "Oh, I could never do that!". But, when I did encounter those reactions, it was quite simple for me to just tell them, "I'm not giving this baby UP...I'm giving him BACK to his parents", and in response to those who said "Oh I could never do that", my reply was "And that is exactly why YOU should not do it". Not everyone is cut out to be a surrogate, hence the need for psychological testing. Not everyone wants to be a surrogate. But for those of us who have it in our hearts to do this amazing thing for people who otherwise would not be able to have children, it is a blessing to everyone, surrogate included.

That said, I know that there are, on occasion, surrogates who cut corners and don't have the appropriate evaluations to make sure that they are mentally prepared/suitable for the journey. I know there are, on occasion, surrogates who do not have appropriate legal counsel. And I know that there are occasionally surrogates who agree to something like termination thinking "I won't have to do it". In my many years in the surrogacy community, these are the only times when I see issues arise.

Back to my own journeys, when the first baby was born, it was an amazing experience. My intended parents were not only present, but my intended mother was the one who delivered her baby. My intended father cut the cord. This was THEIR birth, and I was honored to be a part of their child's birth story! The joy I felt in being able to witness the moment they became parents - words truly cannot describe it! In the almost 4 years that have passed since his birth, the joy I feel for them has not diminished. The happiness I feel about my role in his birth has not diminished.

When the first baby was about 8 months old, his parents asked me if I would carry for them again. There was no time needed to even think about it. I knew from the moment their son was born that I would be honored to help them again if they wanted to grow their family, so I said yes. In September 2014, their little girl was born. Again, her parents were in attendance, and again, my intended mother was able to deliver her baby. She will be 2 years old in September. She is a beautiful little girl, and I do love her and her brother very much. I also love their parents, and their grandparents, and their aunts, uncles, and cousins. They have all become like family to my family.

I know there are some people who claim that surrogacy has a negative impact psychologically on the surrogate. I firmly believe that any surrogate who makes these claims had a negative experience because they either didn't complete the appropriate screenings, did not have their own attorney, or chose to agree to something that they knew they had no intention of following through on, only to be faced with having to do that very thing they agreed to.

I know there are some people who say they worry about the psychological effects of surrogacy on the children born via surrogate. I cannot speak to the experiences of all children, but I can say with certainty that the children I gave birth to as a surrogate are two amazing children who are loved tremendously by their family! They know, in age appropriate terms, their birth stories. The older boy has a picture of his sonogram in his bedroom and regularly asks his mother to see the pictures from when he was in Ms. Sarah's belly. He loves to hear about how he was born! He was at the appointments while I was pregnant with his sister. His story is not a dirty secret - It is celebrated - these children were loved and wanted so much, their parents went to great lengths to ensure they had a safe belly to grow in so that they could be born into their family. I can also attest to the positive impact the surrogacy experience has had on my own son.

I know this is long, but I want to make sure I convey accurately how much surrogacy means to me in my life. I want people to know that surrogacy is an amazing gift to all parties. I have never once been sad about my journeys. I have never missed the babies any more than I miss my nieces and nephews. My son has never been sad about the babies being with their parents. He was at the births. He saw the first baby a few minutes after he was born. He held him. He coo'ed over him. He said he was cute. And then he very happily said goodbye to him as his parents loaded him into their car as we all prepared to leave and go home. The second baby, he came running into the room with my intended mother's mom in time to see her born into her mother's arms. Again, he enjoyed spending time together, and he happily told the family that we would see them later. These experiences have allowed me to show my son the beauty in giving to others. It has allowed my son to see the joy in a family created.

Surrogacy is an amazing gift and I am forever grateful that I have been able to be a part of it.

Thank you,

Sarah Martens

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Bob Barrett—MN House, 32B  
Sean Nienow—MN Senate, 32

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of fully legalizing and reasonably regulating surrogacy in Minnesota. I am a 44-year-old woman who has been married for 16 years. I have 2 beautiful children of my own, ages 13 and 10. I have a Master's Degree from the University of Minnesota and have been employed as a school social worker for the past 19 years. I have been fortunate enough to have been a gestational surrogate twice. The first time I carried twins for a family in Missouri and two years later I was able to carry a single child for a family in Iowa. Being able to do this for these wonderful families were two of the most rewarding experiences of my life, as well as my husband's and children's, who were very much participants in the process. In addition to being very rewarding for all of us, it was also extremely self-empowering for me. Not many people can say that they have given the gift of life and family to others, but I can say that I have carried and delivered 3 beautiful and healthy children for 2 well-deserving middle-class couples, who are extraordinary parents. We keep in touch and our families continue to have a great friendship today.

I began thinking about gestational surrogacy very early on in my adult life. I have had family members, close friends and co-workers who have had difficulty in getting pregnant, staying pregnant, being pregnant or delivering a child. It was heartbreaking to me to see the experiences that these women in my life were having with something that was supposed to be a beautiful and positive experience. After I had my own children, and realized how lucky I was to have relatively easy pregnancies and deliveries, I began researching the surrogacy process. I loved being pregnant, but my family was complete and we did not want any more children of our own. I applied to several agencies making sure that my values, beliefs and wishes would be taken into consideration, and then I was able to ask more questions before choosing an agency I felt confident with to begin the process. Before I even began the matching process with this agency, I underwent a psychological evaluation to ensure that I was entering into this journey being well-informed, stable and for the right reasons. In addition, I had several discussions with the agency staff to ensure that I had a complete understanding of all the possible scenarios that can occur along the way with this journey. I was given information about several couples with whom I had similar ideas with regarding some of the bigger issues and I was able to choose which couples I wanted to have a facilitated phone conversation with. From that point, I was able to choose which couple I wanted to move forward with in this process. Assuming they felt the same way, we were able to converse with each other via phone or email as much as we felt necessary in order to feel comfortable and confident with each other, and to help establish a trusting relationship as we moved forward.

From the very beginning, because I was knowledgeable and well-informed, I knew that I would not be carrying my child and I was NEVER planning on keeping the child(ren) I would be carrying, nor did I want to. I had my children and my family was complete. I wanted to be able to give another couple the same fulfillment in their family that I had in mine. They simply gave me their child(ren) to gestate for them and then I was able to return their child(ren) to them upon completing my task. Therefore, I did NOT sell "my" baby to anyone. I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child(ren) once they were born. It was natural and simply the way it should be. I cried after they were born, but not because of sadness or missing the babies I had growing inside of me. I cried because of the sure joy I felt in seeing the children with their parents and how happy they all were to finally be holding their babies in their arms. I also cried out of pride for myself in being able to give them that gift and thankful that the journey ended so positively and exactly how I dreamed it would be.

I am NOT poor. I live a very comfortable life. I have a salary of \$73,000/year and between my husband and me we own our own home and have an annual household income of over \$150,000.

I am NOT uneducated as some would assume. As stated earlier, I have a Master's degree. I am intelligent and highly competent in making my own decisions for my life. I am perfectly capable of assessing risks of a surrogate pregnancy and deciding whether or not it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

I am NOT being repressed or taken advantage of by the "wealthy" to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help, and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status is irrelevant to me. In fact, they had to make many sacrifices in their lives in order to pursue their dream of having their own children. My intended parents and I have many more commonalities than we do differences, and we have a mutual respect for each other.

I am NOT at all motivated by money, nor did I need the money paid to me for my services. I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).

Not every woman can become a surrogate; it is not an easy process. However, I wholeheartedly believe in surrogacy and believe that it is an absolutely wonderful experience for the right people. Because one does not believe surrogacy should be a legitimate means of having one's own biological children, is all the more reason to ensure that the process is appropriately regulated in the state of Minnesota for those who choose to pursue it. I STRONGLY urge you to

support surrogacy by making it a protected and reasonably regulated process here in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Norstrom*

Michelle Pine  
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Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603  
michelleleighbine@gmail.com

Minnesota Legislators,

It is my understanding that you are discussing legislation that could possibly eliminate legal surrogacy. Although I live in Oregon, my passion for surrogacy is strong and I feel compelled to speak out. Let me first introduce myself as a married mother of three who teaches special education at an alternative public high school in rural southern Oregon. I understand that part of your concern is the psychological wellbeing of the surrogates. While I appreciate your concern, what surrogacy needs is not to be eliminated, but to have appropriate legislation that ensures that best practices are being followed. When these best practices are implemented, surrogacy is an amazing experience, not only for the Intended Parents who get to realize their dreams of becoming a family, but for surrogates and their families as well, who get to play a small part in making that happen.

I recently carried twins for a same-sex couple from Israel. It was easily the most rewarding experience of my life, and aside from carrying and raising my own three children, the most amazing experience. I am currently beginning my second journey carrying for a couple from San Francisco. My family is excited to be doing this again, and is looking forward to experiencing things a little differently in working with a more local couple. As a family, through this journey, we have become more culturally diverse, we have learned about science and medicine and reproduction, we have learned about empathy, we have experienced giving to others in what way you can, we have gained new friendships. We have grown. And while I agree that there are steps that need to be taken to ensure that potential surrogates are emotionally prepared for surrogacy, I want those who are to have the opportunity to embark on this life-changing and incredibly rewarding experience.

As you consider this legislation, I urge you to reach out to other surrogates to hear their stories. Although, unfortunately, there are a few who have had bad experiences, the majority of us are grateful to have been a part in this, many of us so much so that we're signing up to do it again!

Thank you for hearing my voice and considering the thoughts of those whom this will affect.

Sincerely,

Michelle Pine



Tara Soo Portner  
110 Red Shoe Dr  
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507-276-4631  
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My name is Tara Portner. I am 38 years old, and I have just completed my first journey as a gestational surrogate for a wonderful couple. I have graduated from high school with honors, attended college, and am a Patient Care Tech in the ER at a hospital in New Ulm, MN, and I am also the gambling manager for our local youth wrestling program. My salary is around \$41,000 a year, and my household income is about \$91,000 a year.

There are a few reasons why I decided to become a gestational surrogate. My adoptive mother was not able to have children herself. She did a wonderful thing and adopted me and my brother, but I know she always longed to have a biological child as well. I also have a close family member who struggles with infertility, along with many friends and acquaintances. For me, becoming a parent has been the greatest blessing in my life. I just can't imagine not having my children. I wanted to be able to give a wonderful couple this blessing too.

I have a co-worker who has a niece that struggles with infertility. After months of listening to her talk about their struggles to have a baby, I decided that I wanted to help make their dreams come true. My husband and I did a lot of talking and research. We met with this wonderful couple, and there was absolutely no doubt in our minds that we wanted to help them. We have worked with a wonderful company called IARC, and they have been nothing but amazing throughout this journey. We had a very thorough screening through IARC, and very extensive medical and psychological testing at the Methodist Hospital in Rochester before we began the surrogacy process. I am a very strong, independent woman and I am capable of assessing the risks of surrogacy and making my own decision on whether it is the right thing to do for me and my family. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

We had a successful pregnancy, and on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 I gave birth to this wonderful couple's baby. Never did I feel like I was giving up "my" baby. The whole purpose of being a gestational surrogate was to carry another couple's baby to term and for that baby to be returned to the biological parents to be loved and cared for by them. My husband and I fully understood that we would only be gestating their child for them, and not raising it as our own. I had no reservations about giving the intended parents their child once it was born. I had no adverse physical or psychological issues due to the surrogacy. I was not motivated by, nor do I need, the money paid for my services. We did not request any money from the intended parents to carry

their child for them. They wanted to show their eternal gratitude by compensating us for the time and obligations of carrying their child for them, and for giving them the greatest gift ever. In no way am I being taken advantage of by the “wealthy” to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help, and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status is irrelevant to me.

I believe surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process here in Minnesota, and I urge the commission to make that recommendation based on my testimony here.

Jill Rettinghaus  
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Upcoming Gestational Surrogate for Minnesota Resident Couple

To Whom It May Concern,

I write this letter for consideration on behalf of couples who are unable to carry a pregnancy and for the surrogate mothers who selflessly give an otherwise inconceivable gift.

I am currently in the process of becoming a gestational surrogate for my cousin and her husband, who at this present time, wish they remain anonymous. The couple resides in Minneapolis, while myself and family in Iowa. I am 30 years old, married with 2 children, a registered nurse, have an annual combined household income of \$120,000/year, along with full spousal and family emotional and physical support for this surrogacy. Our potential transfer date is October 2016. We approached the intended parents and offered surrogacy as a gift, no strings attached, only our desire to help them begin a family and enjoy what just simply cannot be put into words. I strongly support the legal recognition of commercial gestational surrogacy contracts in the state of Minnesota.

Our cares are being provided by the Colorado Center for Reproductive Medicine in Denver, CO. CCRM takes great pride in the proper screening and medical testing for intended parents, surrogates, and embryos. I have found their staff to uphold great ethical and moral values that clearly put everyone's best interest, including the embryos, at the top of their list. Medical testing has and continues to be extensive for myself. The intended parents also underwent testing, as did their embryos. Such tests include ultrasounds, blood & urine work, hysteroscopy, mock cycle, pap smear, egg retrieval, full history and physicals, semen testing, personality tests, and embryo genetic testing. We have had psych screens to go along with the process and are cleared to continue.

Throughout this process, I have learned that surrogacy is a form of selfless service. It is to do something greater than yourself and to be a part of God's intricate plan to help another, while making it known that such great gifts can be given in the midst of someone else's pain and heartache. It is an honor and a privilege to stand with these intended parents and be a piece in their puzzle that has taken them over a decade to put together. We hope to set another fine example for what surrogacy is truly about and the wonderful outcome that can be achieved with going through the proper channels. Surrogacy, like any medical advancement, has its pros and cons. It is vital that all parties receive separate legal representation, as well as full screening prior to surrogacy, so that each decision can be purposefully and thoughtfully made.

Today, discussion will adhere to surrogate's psychological and health risks. It would be a disservice to any surrogate, intended parent(s), or child resulted from surrogacy in which thorough medical and psych screening is not completed to the utmost specialized extent. Our nation is blessed with educated and ethically sound professionals to help make surrogacy a success while maintaining the best health practices towards those who come for aid and abiding by the laws in place and those to come forth. We are also accompanied by those who will render services when things do not go as planned. The medical field is not black and white, but rather a full array of colors that can bring tremendous joy, happiness, sadness, and pain. How lucky we are to have providers who will educate us on these topics and address

any needs or concerns should they arise so we may make the right decisions for ourselves. Surrogacy is a delicate choice and should be chosen carefully by all involved. Our laws must fight for these ethical services and standards of care so that surrogacy does not fall into the unintended hands. It is our civic duty to bring knowledge and education to surrogacy and all it serves. It would be nothing more than an insult to abolish such a potentially wonderful gift given the knowledge and choices we have to help give each journey a fighting chance.

Sincerely,

Jill Rettinghaus

July 15, 2016

Kami Rowan, MA  
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763-238-3862

To Whom It May Concern:

I am married, in my thirties, and the mother to three wonderful children that keep me very busy. I do work full time as a Human Resources Director for one company while I also work as an independent contractor for a couple other companies as their Human Resource Director as I am in the process of starting my own business. I enjoy the constant challenges that work brings and I am considering going back to school to get my Doctorate in Leadership as I only have my Master's degree right now.

Last year I was a gestational carrier and gave birth to two beautiful, healthy, babies for a couple in Italy who were unable to have children. It was the most fulfilling thing I have done outside of my own family and something I am in the process of doing again as I just agreed to being another person's surrogate.

My journey started seventeen years ago with the birth of my first child. I recall holding him moments after giving birth and thinking how fun the whole experience was. I wondered if someone would have helped me become a mom if I had needed. I decided at that moment that I would be that someone for someone else. However, I wanted to wait until I was finished having my own children as I knew there were risks involved and I didn't want to miss out on having the number of children I wanted due to a complication giving birth to someone else's baby. I ended up being so busy with my family that it never seemed to be a good time to be a surrogate until three years ago.

I had always talked about wanting to be a surrogate and my husband finally said that if I truly wanted to do it, then I better get moving before I got too old. He was absolutely right if I wanted this then I had better do it before the opportunity passed me by. That day I went online and started doing my research to find the right agency for me.

I did find an agency and they had me and my husband do a psychological evaluation as well as show them we did not need the money (I invested the money I received so I can enjoy it when I retire). I gave them all my medical records and had my doctor state that I was physically able to be a surrogate before I even was able to be matched with a couple. The entire process of just being accepted was long and difficult and every time I talked with someone from the agency, they would tell me everything that could go wrong to make sure I really wanted to do this. I was never led to believe that the process would be easy or that I couldn't suffer from severe medical complications which made me feel better about the agency because I knew they weren't looking for woman who wanted to make a quick buck.

When I did get matched and first talked to the intended parents, we discussed the type of involvement everyone wanted in the pregnancies, how decisions would be made regarding abortion or reduction. They told me their beliefs and I told them mine as well as what I was comfortable doing. It was the oddest way to meet someone for the first time as there were no secrets, no whining and dinning, it was very open and

honest as we knew that we had to be on the same page or things wouldn't work out. In the end we had a good understanding of what everyone wanted and how our personalities would fit. The couple seemed so in love and supportive of each other that I felt they would endure any hurdle we encountered so I agreed to join them on their journey to becoming parents.

Our first attempt did not result in pregnancy but the second attempt was successful and I became pregnant with twins. Everyone was overjoyed and even though the parents couldn't be here, I was able to email them the ultrasound so they could see their babies' hearts beating. It was absolutely magical and then the next day I started hemorrhaging and both babies were lost. All our joy was gone and no one had any answers as to why I had the miscarriage. We all felt like failures and wondered what we could have done differently. We all needed time to grieve so I told the intended parents that if they decided to continue the journey, I would be there for them. It took months before they decided to try one last time.

The third time was the charm. It took us two years from our first meeting on the phone to the delivery of their twins. The parents had wanted to be at the birth but the twins came earlier than planned so we taped the delivery and I cared for the babies in the NICU the first 24 hours while we waited for the intended parents to arrive from Italy. I picked them up from the airport and made the arrangements for them to have a translator and a place to stay the first few days they were here at which point they were able to make their own living arrangements.

The babies struggled the first couple days of their life because the formula they were drinking was too harsh for their stomachs and the donated breast milk the hospital had available wasn't settling well either so I decided to pump breast milk for them and did that for the two months they were in the hospital. Every other day I would visit them in the hospital to drop off the milk and I would hold them and help care for them. It was such a wonderful time and the intended parents and I grew even closer together. We went shopping for baby clothes, went to the zoo and spent Easter together. The babies thrived and grew and when they were finally able to leave the hospital, my husband and I rented a hall and paid for the new parents to be married in front of all the people that had helped make the babies possible. The parents weren't allowed to marry in Italy due to the laws against gay marriage but this was something they had desperately wanted to do and everyone was excited to be a part of their journey and watch them become the family they had dreamed of becoming. The doctors, nurses and surrogacy agency came together to watch them be married and celebrate the birth of their twins.

Last spring they came back with the babies to visit us and let us see just how big they were growing. The fifty plus people whose lives were touched by them a year ago all wanted to be there again to celebrate their anniversary and the first birthday of the twins.

These are not my babies but I love them the way I do all my nieces and nephews. Putting them on a plane to Italy a year ago was a joyous occasion because it meant they were healthy and thriving. I love receiving email updates on the milestones they reach and to hear about the sleepless nights the parents are having because I made someone's dream come true. It's so rare that we get to truly change a person's life and touch them in such a way but I got to do that. I got to give two people their dream. They now know unconditional love and the joy of watching their children grow up. They know what it feels like to hear their child say, "I love you," while they wrap their little hands around their necks and give them butterfly kisses.

I was never sought out to be a surrogate and I wasn't looking for money or notoriety. I did get paid but I get paid for every job I do as I hope you do. My time is valuable to me and though I didn't need the money and have never used it other than to invest it for a later date; I did rearrange my schedule and alter my life style to do this. I love to travel and do so frequently but I don't travel when I am pregnant as I prefer to just be home. I am also addicted to coffee but I refuse to drink it when pregnant. I am probably at my healthiest when I am pregnant as I am very picky about what goes in my body.

Never did I feel I was being taken advantage of, if anything I kept hoping no one would think I was taking advantage of the intended parents. I absolutely love being pregnant and would do so all the time if I could. The Intended Parents allowed me the ability to enjoy being pregnant and not have to bring a baby home. My children are great and I wouldn't trade them for anything but each child is expensive and my kids are very active in sports and the arts. I pay about fifty thousand dollars a year just on their activities which is the max I am willing to spend a year as I want to have time to travel the world with my kids and not just sit at their games and plays. I am educated and fully capable of providing the lifestyle my family enjoys. I don't need to be a surrogate to pay my bills.

Surrogacy allowed me to show my kids about compassion and giving to others for the pure joy of giving. I would be honored if my girls choose to be surrogates when they have finished having their own children and that's why I am writing this letter. Surrogacy needs to be regulated, not banned. Banning surrogacy just means we have to go to other states which mean our money goes to other states as we would no longer be in Minnesota to pay taxes or purchase goods and services. We would no longer be here to vote local people into office. I know I would not be here to bring more people into the state for the jobs that I hire them for.

Surrogacy was a great experience for me because I am educated and did my research to find a reputable company that did there due diligence by making sure I was healthy, mentally, physically and financially. Minnesota needs more of this. They need to regulate the companies and hold them accountable for who they choose to use and how they make the decisions when they choose who will be surrogates. Most of the stories about surrogacy are as wonderful as mine but no one hears those because they don't get ratings on television. It's the one percent of the bad stories that ruin it for the ninety nine percent of the good stories. If surrogacy was more regulated that one percent could disappear.

We wouldn't ban politicians from Minnesota because one of them was corrupt. Politicians can do a lot of good for a lot of people. It's the same with surrogacy. I urge you to please recognize all the good things about surrogacy and not let the few bad cases misguide you. I urge you to look at the screening process and the agency that bad cases come from so they can be accountable for their actions.

Surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process in Minnesota as it changes so many lives in a positive way. Please contact me if you have any questions about my experience with surrogacy.

Sincerely,



Kami Rowan, MA

Brooke Schroht  
6770 NW 26th Street  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
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b.schroht@icloud.com

To whom it may concern:

My name is Brooke Schroht, and I am writing in regard to my surrogacy experience, in which I delivered healthy twin girls in 2015.

My husband, three children and I reside in a small community in Southern Minnesota. Our family owns and operates both an Organic dairy farm, and a local health and wellness center. We (my husband and I ) are both college graduates (BS and BA) respectively, very active in our business and agriculture communities, and I also dedicate my time to coaching our local girl's basketball team. We are financially independent, and the thought process behind becoming a surrogate was not financially motivating, but rather an emotional decision.

As parents, we were motivated by several factors. First, we felt very blessed to have three healthy children, and were very aware of others without the ability to conceive on their own. We understood the opportunity for adoption, but also realize peoples desire to bear their own blood related children. Another motivating factor was the lesson of sharing our altruistic values with our children. Our belief is love is love, and everyone should be able to share that emotion of having their own child and share all of the trials and triumphs that accompany parenthood. We were blessed with the gift of children and wanted to share that gift with another family.

In very certain terms, I was in no way financially motivated to be a surrogate. My husband and I certainly didn't need or depend on the money to undergo the experience. Of course we were fairly compensated for our time, expenses, obligations, etc related to becoming pregnant and carrying the twins to delivery. Throughout the surrogacy process I knew and understood the babies were not mine. Besides the fact that there was no biological connection to the girls, I understood that my participation in the process was a minute part in all that was to come for the new parents. Nothing will ever compare to the look of sheer love that the parents had for their new daughters following the birth, from that moment I knew my intentions I had set out in the beginning were complete.

You can ask my husband, I am an assertive and motivated woman from a financially stable and loving family. I am not vulnerable, and completely able to make intelligent and informed decisions, especially in relation to my life and body and any associated risks. My task was clear from day one, and *it* relied on a strong support system; my husband, the intended parents, extended family, church community, and also the agency I worked with. Not a day goes by do I regret my decision to be a gestational surrogate. The experience changed my outlook on life, gave me a new found perspective on what is truly important, and provided a greater sense of gratefulness to appreciate all of God's blessings. It still astonishes a year later what a positive impact our surrogacy experience had on our local community and the amount of outpouring love and blessings we not only received from our family but from a countless number of community members.



In conclusion, I support women having the option to make this decision for themselves, and to provide this same gift/experience to other families.

Sincerely,  
Brooke Schrodt

Sara M. Kohlhof-Schwarzrock

314 North Park Avenue

Springfield Minnesota 56087

507-227-9409

[sarakohlhof@yahoo.com](mailto:sarakohlhof@yahoo.com)

I delivered a baby boy via gestational surrogacy on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016. From the very beginning this has been one of the most amazing and positive experiences of my life. I wholeheartedly support surrogacy and believe it should be a protected and reasonably regulated process in Minnesota.

I have a beautiful family life of my own. My husband and I, both 29, have successful careers and make more than enough money for our family of 4. I chose to become a surrogate after we decided our family was complete. So many people suffer from infertility and I realized I had the ability to give someone the same joy and fulfillment I get from my own children. When I visualized this amazing moment where I'd reach my arms out to these people and hand them their beautiful baby, I knew in my heart I had to do it. I spent 4 months committed to researching and assessing the risks involved. I decided to work with a reputable agency to guide me through the journey. I chose this agency because they have a rigorous physical and psychological screening process for both the surrogates and intended parents. This included a background check and several interviews with the agency and psychiatrist. This is a crucial part of the process and I would not have moved forward without it. They successfully matched us with an amazing couple with compatible views and desires. The line of communication was very open, which is also absolutely necessary. Although my agency coordinator and the parents never made any attempts to misguide or manipulate me, they would not have been successful had they tried. I am mentally and emotionally intelligent. There was no pressure or disrespect, only compassion and support from all parties involved and I had an intimate relationship with the intended parents. I was required to spend time talking with a psychologist before, during and after the surrogacy to assess and support my mental health for the safety of myself as well as the intended parents. Although I never had any issues or major concerns, it was comforting to know that they were there to help me along the way. I had spent so much time researching the good and bad in all things surrogacy. I moved forward knowing exactly what was happening and that the child was and always would be theirs. I was doing this to fulfill their dreams and be a part of something wonderful. In regards to the money involved I truly believe I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and efforts during the surrogacy. My actions in this experience were from the heart for the intended parents. It was selfless in nature and all parties involved in my gestational surrogacy journey believe a surrogate should receive compensation for these efforts.

There was nothing negative about this experience for me or my family. My young children (5 & 7 at the time) understood what we're doing and are proud to be a part of bringing "Baby Eric" into this world and making a family whole. We continue to have consistent communication with the family and they've even asked me to carry for them again. After two months discussing with my husband and a physical, my answer was a huge resounding yes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sara M. Kohlhof-Schwarzrock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'K'.

July 18, 2016  
Jenna Lynn Sipe  
706 Canton Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Represented by: Amy Klobuchar  
Al Franken

Carlos Mariani  
Sandy Pappas  
Betty McCollum

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jenna Sipe. I am writing to let you know just how important the world of infertility and surrogacy are in my life. Let me start by giving you some background of myself. I graduated from Cretin Derham Hall in 2003. I continued on to go to St.Catherine's University followed by St.Paul College where I graduated. I am 31 years old! I am happily married and have been with my husband for 16 years. We are a Catholic family who has 3 amazing children together. He works full time in the Union while I also work full time running my own business and we have both been in the same employment for over 10 years. We own our home in St.Paul and love to go camping in the summer. A typical Minnesota family right?! Together we gross over \$120,000 a year and are comfortable. After I had my first 2 children and being in love with parenthood, I also found myself with many friends who were struggling to be able to have children like myself. It was heartbreaking. No matter the reason, this is where I was. They all had their reasons; whether it is infertility, same-sex couples, genetics, health restraints; it didn't matter. We are talking about great people that would have made ever better parents. It was almost like a no-brainer for my husband and I, I became very passionate about being able to do this and my husband supported me every step of the way and let me tell you, there's a lot of them. He supported my wants to be able to help someone experience what we were able to. I didn't take this commitment lightly however, I spent over 6 months researching and in September of 2009 I choose to contact an agency in California to help me on a journey to be a gestational carrier. This decision had such a strong impact on my life that here I sit almost 7 years later still intrigued and awed by myself and the women out there who are going down the same road as I once had that I have been lucky enough to meet along the way. The world of surrogacy and fertility is such an emotional topic it's hard to find the right words to make my argument strong enough that the ladies and gentlemen who are reading it can understand just how important this is for so many people out there. Let me start by saying that this is one of the best, most fulfilling decisions I have ever made. It should be simple really; I CHOOSE to do this, I CHOOSE to take the steps to become a surrogate. There are many, many steps in the process in order to make this happen. Not only do these steps include a background check and a physical but I also did an MMPI and talked to psychologist. My family was asked genetic background details and a history of medical issues dating back as far as grandparents on both maternal and paternal sides. There is also plenty of time to change your mind should it come to that. There are people to support you every step of the way, lines of communication are always open. I had a person that I was connected with for medical questions, another person for questions throughout the whole process as well as people through the fertility clinic I could ask about the questions for once everything was happening. I was contacted by support groups should I be struggling with anything, I was

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given questionnaires to fill out about how I was feeling, phone conferences were offered to me at least once a week where I could simply chat with other women about their experiences all while building a relationship with the intended parents and hearing their story, about what brought them to this point, about the baby, about the birth plan and future! I never once felt unsupported by anyone through it all; it's not as if you sign on the line and left to your own vices. I had a lot of say in the what's and when's throughout the process and support should I need it. No one, at any point in time, ever twisted my arm to do anything; no one made me do this. I didn't wake up one morning pregnant by a child that was someone else's, this isn't an alien thing. It's a choice! Not to mention, during the matching phases of the process you know who are working with, you pick that couple. There are steps in place so you are guided through getting to know that couples through many different means of communication, opinions are heard on both ends. You don't just choose you intended family, they choose you to. You choose each other! I went through this process... twice; I met the intended family, I built a relationship with said intended family and was excited every step of the way to help them fulfill their dream of having a family of their own and in a process where they thought I was helping them, my heart became full... full of pride for what I was able to do for them that after years of trying, they just couldn't. Being a surrogate is one of the best decisions I ever made. I got to make a family; I choose to help complete another family. In January of 2010, I gave birth to twin girls and got to watch as the intended parents held their children for the first time! Those children are so very well educated and cared for and happy! Fast forward a few years; we still talk, we have a great relationship. In December of 2013, I gave birth to a baby boy and was once again lucky enough to be able to watch those happy tears of joy on the nervous faces of the intended parents as they held their baby for the first time. A baby they have waited for years and years. In my mind I keep going back to I choose this... Me!! I am a woman who is capable of making her own decisions for what is best for her life, I make my own money, I got a college education, I am married and own a home, I am a good person and I vote! I do support the government and think their say is important but what I don't support is them, human beings just like me, trying to decide how I use my body, how I choose to spend about a year of my time. I have no regrets. I do not look at it as if my intended family makes more money than me or they are using their money to "buy" a baby from me. That is just not the way it is! I am simply doing my job and giving them back what is rightfully theirs. Expectations are made very clear before anything happens; Let me clarify this more by saying in being a gestational carrier there is nothing in the baby that is genetically mine. I am simply an oven. It's time consuming on my part so I didn't look at it as selling a baby. That's just crazy. I look at it as being a very important, 24/7 type of job. Yes, I do have a connection with the child and that makes me smile but I do not need, want or expect more than that. Think about their story of what's bringing them to this point, a point where they are entrusting THEIR baby to another women to grow for 9 months and in the end their baby will be returned to them because it is theirs! Just because I am a women does not make me weak. I can decide

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how I want to use my body, time and my uterus and I don't need the government to tell me anything otherwise. This process is extensive and expensive and time consuming, so think how much these intended families want a child in order to go through all the testing and time and travel and paperwork, the list goes on, in order to have a baby. No matter what their story is, infertility, same-sex, health issues that may prevent them from reproducing on their own as well as the surrogate who chooses to be here.... It's our choice! Don't stop us from making our choice! My life is full of love for my surrogacy families. I made a family! I am proud to be a carrier and I want to keep my choice to do it again if I want! Don't take my choices away. This is my body and my life! I would go back and do it all again. Lastly, I wouldn't give up the smile on my own children's faces when we talk about our "extended family" and see pictures of where they are now for the world. My children as well as my family are involved in it all! This is me, a proud mom, wife and gestational carrier asking you to not take away my rights to be a woman and a carrier. My choices are up to me (and my husband and children). I have earned that right!

Sincerely,

Jenna Sipe

A very proud gestational carrier!

Carrie Skelton  
[12468 95th Ave.](#)  
[Clear Lake, MN 55319](#)  
[Cskelton@isd726.org](mailto:Cskelton@isd726.org)

Dear Legislative Commission,

A long time ago,(15 years) I had a calling from God to help couples grow their families. After a long road in finding out who to talk with, I met a family adoption lawyer. She walked me through (in understandable English )what a generic surrogate contract may look like. In the meantime, a young couple from MN was trying to find a surrogate. The lawyer asked if I'd like to meet this couple as intended parents. My husband and I agreed and the couple turned out to be the ones we would help.

I chose to be a gestational carrier only. I know that parents want their own biological children, if they can.

I remember going through a VERY detailed contract, negotiating when necessary the expectations of the surrogate/family relationship. The agency (IARC) had my husband and I take a psyc evaluation AND speak to a psychologist about this adventure. She, Dr. Hammer, said everything was "in good order" and saw no reason for any problems or concerns. And she was right!! Everything went off without a hitch. Because I knew this was a calling on my life, I was at peace with the whole process. The agency did an excellent job keeping me informed and answering any questions I had. And the medical staff did a perfect job in helping my body get ready for transferring embryos. I can't say enough about how great everyone was about communicating information. That had a huge impact on how this experience affected me.

The pregnancy was flawless. My body does so well with pregnancy. I delivered TWIN baby girls on their mothers 30 th Birthday- how much better is that? Everything went according to plan....The hospital I attended was fully on board with the surrogate delivery. I had a natural delivery. The intended couple was present in the delivery room and were able to take their babies right to their own room because they both weighed over 6.5 lbs. and didn't need any extra support. What a miracle!!

For me, the best part was the delivery...the moment we had all been waiting for...the intended couple were handed their babies right from the doctors hands... I can't put that moment of joy and feeling into words... My husband was also present and video taping for the couple...at one point you can see the couple looking over at me and saying "look at her...looking at us" with such pride and gratitude ! Nothing could have been better.

I had lots of opportunities to see the babies while in the hospital, and also got to meet some relatives. I will admit, it was bitter sweet when everyone got the okay to go their separate ways. I was on a hormonal roller coaster , BUT, I was NEVER sad or regretful about my surrogate choice. I never once thought or believed those babies belonged to me. I had children of my own and knew my family was complete. I was freely given the option to seek counseling if I thought necessary..but I didn't. I knew that I knew that I knew that this was a blessing given by God for a very deserving couple.

My story doesn't end there... I had such a positive experience with the agency that I helped another couple...a very similar story...all relationships in every aspect were great. I gave birth to a baby boy !! Again, a natural delivery with the intended parents present. The agency was wonderful ,the medical teams did a great job. The hospital remembered me from the last time and were excited for me to be there again.

This was fantastic. A high for me, in a way. My body responded so well to pregnancy. And that joy I tried to describe before? I couldn't get enough of it !!

I let the agency know that I wanted to help...again. I was matched and had TWIN girls for a couple from Canada. Another great experience. I had a c section for this surrogacy which is quite common. I had no problems , no complications or regrets.

I continue to stay in touch with all the families, and I enjoy hearing about how the kids have grown...all their experiences and accomplishments.

It's part of my nature to want to help people, children especially. See, I am a paraprofessional for special education children at my local public school.

I would also like to note that I had an opportunity to see (meet) the twins from the first surrogacy.The couple moved to Florida before the girls turned two. After being there a short time the mom asked how I felt or what it felt like to see them... I was completely honest when I told her " it's like coming to see my friends kids ! I know I heard a sigh of relief. That is the truest truth with all my surrogate families.

I also had a chance to meet the boy I delivered for a MN couple. He was 8 when I met him. When he found out who I was, with no hesitation came and gave me a great big hug and said " thank you".

I didn't get paid for having these babies. I was paid a reasonable amount for my time obligations, expenses and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended couples baby for them.

I also did not sell these babies to the intended parents. These were their own biological children. I understood before I became pregnant that I would return their children to them once they were born.

I would strongly urge the state of MN to allow surrogacy to take place with reasonable regulations from the government.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my stories.

Carrie Skelton



Jenny Stephenson

20962 Huntsville Trail, Lakeville MN 55044

612-619-6572

Stephenson1706@gmail.com

July 18, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter as it has been brought to my attention that there are a group of people that are opposed to surrogacy. When I heard about this I was surprised. I assume there must be a lot of mis-information out there because my experience as a surrogate was wonderful. I thought I would share my story so others can continue to benefit from this practice.

I do not know if I am a typical surrogate or if I am an outlier. My husband and I are both upper middle class, college graduates, with 3 children of our own. I had 2 great pregnancies with my own children before recognizing that I would be open to being a gestational surrogate for another couple. It had never occurred to me before that this was even a thing, but one day while watching a program about surrogates, I turned to my husband and said...I would do that! It was kind of a joke at the time and we never really looked into it.

A few years later some of our closest friends were struggling with their pregnancies. They had one daughter already and like us were working on growing their family. The mother has Lupus and it became more and more dangerous to her own health to keeping trying. Ultimately she was just unable to bring a child to term.

Thinking of their problem one night, I brought it up with my husband. We decided to let them know we were open to the idea if it was something they'd thought about. They had been thinking about it too, and had specifically thought of me! So when we came to them with our offer to help it just felt right. So after what seemed like endless visits with doctors, lawyers, and counselors we were on our way.

For our situation it just made sense. I know other couples and surrogates may not be so lucky. There are a couple big arguments in this debate over surrogacy. This idea that poor people are being coerced into having babies for the wealthy. That wasn't our experience, I hope regulation can control that from being someone's experience. The other is this idea that it is too emotionally difficult for the women and even the children to be separated after birth. Again this was not our experience. With proper screening this shouldn't be an issue.


We did not do this for the money. We did not "sell a baby". We saw a need that we could fulfill and we provided a service. Pregnancies are not without work and sacrifice. Pregnancies effect your work life, your social life, and your family life! Throughout this letter I often say "we", to acknowledge the sacrifice made by my husband and our children. Pregnancies are not without risk to the health of

the mother either. Even with all that said, it still felt a little strange being compensated. It is just one of those things. It is not “buying and selling children”, and at the same time it is not pizza delivery. It is its own special thing that needs to be regulated responsibly, but not prohibited.

To address the emotional effects about giving the baby to the intended parents. For us that just wasn't an issue. It wasn't our baby, I considered myself the oven for someone else's bread- that's all. Obviously it's much more intimate than that, but if there was any doubt in my mind about those feelings, I wouldn't have volunteered. But I can understand that some people may develop feelings during the process. If anyone thinking about surrogacy isn't sure how they feel about it- I wouldn't recommend they become involved. I was sure of my feelings.

I believe there are many people like me that can happily provide this wonderful service without fear of an emotional attachment. In cases with emotional distress, I'm sure it can be difficult. Again if that is a fear- don't get involved. This is why the screening process is crucial. I don't think every woman is meant for this. Everyone is different. But for those with the right stuff I think it is a great thing. It is for that reason that I think surrogacy should be protected and of course reasonably regulated here in MN. I urge the commission to make that recommendation.

Sincerely,



Jenny Stephenson

Jennifer Lynn Stiernagle  
33 4<sup>th</sup> Street Easton, MN 56025  
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bjstiern5@bevcomm.net

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like my positive surrogacy experiences to be heard. Becoming both Gestational and Traditional Surrogate has changed me as a person, a mother, a friend and a wife. There needs to be respect and understanding for those that deal with infertility and the journey they go through to have their own biological children. I believe many of us take for granted the gift God has given most of us to have children on our own and unassisted. I am so happy that I was able to help two different families and help bring four beautiful children into the world. It would be unfortunate to not have surrogacy as part of Minnesota lives going forward. It is something I am passionate about and enjoy sharing with curious people. I am here to tell the commission that people doing surrogacy matter.

I am 36 years old, have two years of college education, and am currently a self-employed Architectural/Structural Drafter. I gross \$15,000 and have a household gross income of \$70,000. I have been married to my husband for fifteen years and we have been blessed with our four children who are 14, 12, 10 and 8 years old. It was after three of our children were born that I shared with my husband that I desired to become a surrogate for women who are not able to carry a baby. He supported my desire, suggesting we finish our family before we make someone's dream of a family a reality. So after our fourth child was born in 2007, we researched surrogacy and I educated myself about the process of surrogacy. When I decided to become a surrogate, I knew I'd be giving the most precious gift one could possibly give another. We became acquainted with a family from Michigan. Sara shares the same disability as our oldest daughter and I learned during our second phone conversation that they wanted more children; they already had one child; but it was hard on her body to carry. It was then that I shared with her that I desired to become a surrogate. Our families met, relationships formed, and I delivered twins for them through Gestational Surrogacy in 2009. Then I was blessed with becoming a surrogate again with a different family. Cindi was not able to carry due to a hysterectomy at a young age. All she wanted to be when she was growing up was a mother. We went through a difficult realization, after two attempted egg retrievals, that Cindi couldn't produce any viable eggs. My husband and I prayed about it and three months later we offered to use my eggs, opting for the Traditional Surrogacy process this time. They took a couple months to research and think about my offer and ultimately accepted it. I gave them the gift of parenthood and I delivered a baby girl for them in 2014 and a baby boy just two months ago, back in May. I had experienced such an incredible connection between myself and the intended parents. I always perceived them as the parents. Whether my eggs were involved or not, these children were brought into this world for them to be the parents. I had no difficulty emotionally separating and giving the intended parents their child(ren) after birth.

Being a surrogate has been such a blessing and life lesson for my children. They knew at a young age that a family is made of love and that's all you need. My family and I have two new extended families. We still keep in contact with both families, one a lot more than the other, and that is okay. I have loved being a part of this and it is one of the best things I have done with my life. The true reward is seeing the faces of the parents when they see their baby for the first time. That is something I will carry with me forever.

I feel competent to make my own decision about becoming a surrogate. I do not need the government to "protect" me from myself in making a decision to become a surrogate by banning the process altogether. I believe surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process here in Minnesota and I am urging the commission to make that recommendation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lynn Stiernagle

Kristin Veldhuisen  
5395 Kingsbury Pl NW  
Rochester, MN 55901  
Phone: 507-317-9627  
Email: krisfoley01@hotmail.com

Minnesota Representatives: Timothy Walz, John Kline, Erik Paulsen, Betty McCollum, Keith Ellison, Tom Emmer, Collin Peterson and Richard Nolan.

Minnesota State Senators: Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken

Members of the Legislative Commission on Surrogacy,

My name is Kristin Veldhuisen, I am a 27 year old gestational surrogate. I graduated from the Minnesota State University – Mankato in 2010 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree, I currently work full time as an Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor and make an individual gross income of \$47,000; household gross income of \$100,000. I am a Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran and very strong in my faith.

I was first introduced to surrogacy when I was in college and heard a speaker talk about her experiences. I knew it was something I wanted to do because I truly enjoy helping other people and once I had a child of my own, I knew that this is something that no one should have to live without. I am currently in the process of going through my first surrogacy journey and I have found the process to be nothing but amazing to date. I love the agency I am working with and the amount of support, education and screening they do and provide is above and beyond. I have never, at any point in time, perceived the child as "mine"; I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents child. My primary motivation to become a surrogate is being able to provide couples/individuals the opportunity to be parents.

The agency I am working with has done nothing but continue to educate me in regards to the process. The process is very thorough, they do medical screenings, psychological screenings, get background history, pregnancy histories, provide education material, support groups, and so much more in order to make sure you understand the process. I am not being taken advantage of by the "wealthy" to gestate their children, my intended parents could not have a child without my help and I appropriately and simply wanted to help them and give them this wonderful gift. Their economic status doesn't mean anything to me. I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogacy. I have done extensive research on the process and I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

I couldn't imagine not being a surrogate, it has been an amazing journey so far and I am just getting started. I am excited and thrilled to see what is next for me in this journey and can't wait to bring a healthy baby/babies into this world for my Intended Parents. I believe surrogacy should be a protected and reasonably regulated process here in Minnesota and I am urging the commissions to make that recommendation.

Thank you,

Kristin Veldhuisen

Corrin Voeller  
10024 Cottonwood Street NW  
Coon Rapids, MN 55448  
July 19, 2016

Senate Representative: Alice Johnson  
House Representative: Jerry Newton

Dear Legislative Commission:

My name is Corrin Voeller and I am writing to express my views on Gestational Surrogacy. I am a surrogate. The first surrogate baby I delivered was in November 2014 and I had such a wonderful experience that I am doing it again: I am currently 24 weeks pregnant with a second child for the same family. These babies are not genetically related to me. I have felt honored and filled with gratitude to have the opportunity to be the person to help this most deserving couple have children. Never once did I consider these children to be mine, I am only a willing helper in their journey to having a family. My experience with this family was so wonderful and I am excited to give their daughter a little sister this November.

I am 29 years old and have a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a minor in Communications. I will graduate in the spring with my Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. You see, family is more important to me than anything in the world and I want to help people build their families and offer them support in my chosen career. I am also married to a wonderful man who works as an Account Manager for a Fortune 200 company here in Minnesota. He has supported me through this process and has grown close to the family we have helped create. He also has a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with plans to be involved in politics later in life. We have two children, 6 years old and 5 years old. Both of our children consider the family to be great friends and love to draw them pictures and write them letters expressing their love.

We are a self-sufficient couple. We own our own house in Coon Rapids which is where we both grew up and our families still live. Both of our families are supportive of surrogacy as well and are very proud to tell their friends how their children have helped build families. Our combined income is about \$90,000.

When I first learned of surrogacy, I remember being rocked to the core. I couldn't believe there were people out there that wanted families and couldn't have them!

I wanted to help. I researched the process, I talked to former surrogates and I discussed it with my husband. We decided this was a journey we needed to take to give back and help others. I contacted an agency and learned how the process works. Never once did I feel pressured to do this. My husband and I decided for ourselves that this is how we would help others and this is how we will teach our children that we are given the opportunity to change other people's lives and those opportunities should not be wasted.

The day I delivered the baby for the most deserving couple in the world is a day I will never forget. With my husband and my sister by my side, a beautiful girl finally went into the arms of two people with the biggest hearts. We got to watch them immediately transform into parents. The transformation was all consuming: the love in their bodies as they cradled their daughter, the tears of gratitude that were spilled onto mine and my husband's shoulders as they hugged and thanked us for our help, and the relief in their eyes as they looked at each other and realized their long road to a family has finally reached its end, these images will be with me forever. A bond has formed between two families that is unlike any you get to have in this life. We all worked hard together to create the American dream: a family you get to call your own and children you get to raise in a house full of love. Our children, the next generation, has learned through this experience the power of turning to your neighbor and offering that helping hand. This is what we have created and I am very, very proud of these accomplishments.

Some people don't understand surrogacy and want to take away these opportunities for families to come together to create life, life that they do not take for granted. The people you will meet that are involved in surrogacy are people that cherish family and want to sprinkle love throughout the world like confetti. I ask that you open your minds and hearts and really listen to our stories and help us keep surrogacy as a way to create a family in Minnesota possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Corrin Voeller', written in a cursive style.

Corrin Voeller  
Proud Gestational Surrogate  
cbvoeller@gmail.com  
763-412-6983

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to share my experience as a Gestational Surrogate of twin born a little over two years ago. I am a 41-year-old mother of two. I reside at 23086 Guarani St. NW St. Francis, MN 55070. I am not affiliated with any particular religion, but I hold myself to my own moral standards. I hold a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Metro State University. I am currently employed fulltime as a Social Worker for a metro county Social Service Department. I have held this position for almost 9 years. I complete very important investigations on the most vulnerable of people in our community. I am NOT uneducated. I make roughly \$60,000 per year and also receive child support for my minor child, I am NOT poor.

I had contemplated becoming a surrogate following my divorce from my husband. I knew I wanted to have the experience of carrying a child, having very positive experiences with my two previous pregnancies. I knew that my current situation would not lend for me to start over and raise any more children myself. I was happy with raising and caring for my two school aged boys and did not feel that starting over with an infant was right for me or my family.

About 8 years ago, I started thinking about becoming a surrogate after hearing about someone else's experience. I researched it a bit more and decided this WAS something I could do, physically and emotionally. Learning about the difference between a Gestations Surrogate and a Traditional Surrogate really helped me feel this was right for me. Although the timing was not just quite right in 2008, it planted the seeds for my future decision. In 2012, I came across this decision again. With the support of my significant other, I took the leap and contacted an agency.

The process was not a quick one. This decision was taken under much consideration having discussed this with my significant other, family and friends. All supported me in my decision. Working with a competent and trusted agency was also very reassuring. They provided me with the knowledge and legal resources to help guide me with the more complex and legal decisions. This process by nature makes a person really contemplate their own beliefs, and how you want the future of the relationship of the intended parent and the children to be long after the baby is born.

I was match with a phenomenal couple. They are residents of the UK. We developed a friendship through the matching process. Again, I was much more reassured this was the right thing to do after hearing their story and being able to exchange questions and sharing personal history. The couple I chose to help is a gay couple in a committed long-term relationship. They could not have a child that is genetically related to them without this process. They had struggled with other agencies through India and found IARC to have the best success ratio. Our relationship developed even more through technologies that allowed for us to communicate with ease. We would email and Skype and really get to know each other. To this day, I truly believe they are my friends and love me as family.

The legal process, was not without hiccup, but was a blessing in disguise, allowing for more time to build on our friendship. From the start of the contract development to the delivery of the babies, there was over two years to develop our friendship. We hold a bond like no other friendships I have ever had. I realize this may not be typical for all, but I have NO regrets in my choice throughout this entire process. I had full consideration in deciding how many embryos could be placed during the implantation process.



There was never any coercion or pressure to have multiple embryos. I never once felt I was being taken advantage of. Having no more than two embryos implanted was more than acceptable to me knowing that there was a chance of having twins, but also increased the chance of having one successful implantation. Luckily both took, and this couple can both have children that are genetically related to each of them, as well the babies being genetically related to each other. One of highest moment was sharing with them that the embryos (one from each dad) both took and that they were going to have twins.

Throughout the pregnancy, I was able to share with the intended parents all the details of the prenatal visits, and provide them with the ultrasound images. They flew into the US about a month before the due date to get acclimated and to be prepared in case the babies were born early. This was a very special time having them participate in the prenatal visits and hearing the heartbeats for the first time. Having the ability to spend quality time with them, not only was reassuring that these two are going to be excellent parents, but getting to know them more and feeling their gratitude and appreciating at such a deep level was amazing. Words cannot express the joy it has brought me to feel their appreciation. They would share with me their ideas about rearing twins and also asked for my advice having raised two children myself. They have also allowed for me to come visit and stay with them and the twins last fall.

Throughout the pregnancy with the twins, I had a very different emotional attachment, than with my own children. I had many months to prepare along with the knowledge that these babies are not genetically related to me, I had no problem separating the idea that these babies did not belong to me. I always felt (and still do) whenever I speak of the babies, it was as if I was talking about my friend's babies. Even immediately after the twins were born, I did not feel the same bond that I did with my own kids. I talk about this to this day, that whenever I am asked "how many children do you have?", my automatic response is to say "two", referring to my two boys.

The experience of being a surrogate has been one of the most positive experiences I have ever had in my life. I know that I have a lifelong bond with the parents and also with the twins. I have been to London to visit them and get enjoy every single picture and email they send. I know my personal experience is just that and everyone's will be different. There are so many good things that came out of this experience for me, I had wished that I was young enough to do it again.

Looking back on my life, I am certain that being a gestational surrogate will be one of the things that I will feel good about forever. I would not change a thing about my decisions and feel particularly blessed that I have met some of the most amazing people throughout, that will be lifelong friendships.

Taking the option away by not allowing surrogacy would be heartbreaking for me and for the thousands of families that are unable to conceive themselves. I am a very independent woman and feel I am fully able to understand the risks of surrogacy as well as decide whether I can handle the emotions that come with the process. There were many wrap around services that were developed into my contract to allow for assistance had I needed any emotional support following. Allowing the government to make that decision for me is ABSURD!!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sara Warner, Gestational Surrogate 2013-2014

Delia S. Winter  
6526 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.  
Richfield, MN 55423  
[dswinter@yahoo.com](mailto:dswinter@yahoo.com)  
612-240-9429

My name is Delia Winter and I gave birth to a baby girl, through surrogacy, in April 2013.

I have 2 Master's degrees, am an Educator, have been married to the same person for over 23 years, have an annual household income of over \$100,000, and am not affiliated with any religion.

I chose to be a gestational surrogate because I love to help people. My intended parents were an international same-sex couple. It was one of the best things I have ever done. I never considered the baby to be mine, and did not have any trouble giving her to her fathers when she was born. I have kept in regular contact with the dads and have seen them at least once a year since the birth.

I was not repressed or taken advantage of by "wealthy" people, to gestate their child; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help.

I was not primarily motivated by the money paid for my services.

I did not get paid for a baby; I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' child for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).

I am an assertive, independent woman who was perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it was appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.

I did not sell “my” baby to the intended parents; I RETURNED the intended parents’ baby to them after they temporarily placed her in my custody to gestate for them, with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their child to them when I had completed my task.

I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once it was born.

Sincerely,  
Delia S. Winter

Kayla Winters  
10025 Trenton Ln North  
Maple Grove MN 55369  
763-439-8840  
[Kaylawinters324@gmail.com](mailto:Kaylawinters324@gmail.com)

Many opponents of surrogacy have no direct connection to it or experience with it, which makes their overall stance misguided. A common misconception those opposed hold true is that the women acting as surrogates either have a low income, they are undereducated, psychologically unstable, they are being – whether directly or indirectly – forced into becoming a surrogate, or all of the above which is incredibly inaccurate. I personally know multiple women acting as surrogates and I can tell you right now the vast majority of them do not fit into that stereotype and to support that statement here are a few of the many I have met:

- #1: She holds a Master’s Degree in Education for which she graduated with a 4.0. Her income not only reflect but exceeds her level of education.
- #2: She and her husband are both in the National Guard. They both hold bachelor’s degrees and outside of the Guard they maintain civilian jobs. Their combined household income is three times that of the Minnesota average.
- #3: She holds a Master’s Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She and her husband have a combined household income that is above the state average and she is personally responsible for over half of that combined income.
- #4: She holds a Bachelor’s degree in the field of science, she graduated with honors. She currently works for her home state as a microbiologist. Her income alone would put her above the state average but when you add in her husbands they soar to nearly three times the average.

That’s only four of the many surrogates I know on a personal level who don’t fit the opponents stereotypical description. They are not poor and they are not undereducated. Additionally, all 4 women and their husbands were screened by a mental health professional, so the psychologically unstable view is also unfitting and inaccurate. If you are willing to trust the above mentioned individuals to; educate your children, protect your country, counsel mentally unstable citizens, and assist in the process of developing vaccines to protect you and your family then I don’t see why you wouldn’t trust them to make their own personal decisions about surrogacy. They don’t need you to make decisions for them, they are perfectly capable of doing that themselves, they need you to protect and reasonably regulate the journey they have chosen to embark on.

I would now like to share all 4 women’s stated reasons for becoming a surrogate.

#1 “I love being pregnant and I’m done having my own children but feel called to help start someone their family”

#2 “My family and I would like to help a family bring joy to their lives as our son has brought to ours”

#3 “I think all capable parents should be able to have children. I support alternative methods of family formation. I am fortunate enough to have three healthy children of my own and would like to help others who aren’t as lucky”

#4 “Having gone through our own infertility journey (male factor) I know firsthand how heartbreaking wanting a biological child can be. I want to help others overcome this struggle. Everyone deserves to be a parent if they chose.”

As you can see, altruism was the main motivation for all four women as it is for the vast majority of surrogates. Not one woman used terms like *need* or *forced to* they instead used words like *want or would like to help*. If the opposing side can't see the educated minds, the financial prosperity, the psychological stability and the altruistic desire put forth by these four women and thousands of women out there like them, then maybe they are the ones whose motives should be put into question.

Lindsay Wittrock  
668 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW  
Forest Lake, MN 55025  
(651) 408-2917  
lindsaywittrock@hotmail.com

State Representatives Bob Dettmer and Tom Emmer  
State Senator Karin Housley

I am writing as a former and current surrogate in support of surrogacy in Minnesota. I am a 34-year-old married mother of three of my own children. I hold a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and my husband and I own a home and make a good living. I was not solicited or coerced to pursue surrogacy, nor was it a financial necessity. Rather, surrogacy is something I pursued on my own out of a desire to help another family realize their dream of having children. My own three pregnancies were easy, healthy, and uncomplicated and I felt incredibly blessed and humbled. I felt compassion for others who are unable to have successful pregnancies on their own and I wanted to help them experience the same blessings that came so easily to me.

I sought out surrogacy through a reputable local agency that was able to match me with intended parents and oversee the process to ensure that everyone had the same expectations. My husband and I received psychological and medical evaluations to ensure that we understood the process and any risks involved and were mentally, emotionally, and physically equipped to handle surrogacy. During the matching process, my husband and I discussed with the intended parents all aspects of the surrogacy process and any complications that could potentially arise to ensure that we were all in agreement and on the same page before beginning.

The twin children that I carried were not genetically related to myself nor my husband. It was always explicitly stated and understood that they were the children of their biological, intended parents, and that my role was as a temporary caretaker until the babies were ready to enter the world and go home. The assertion by some that surrogacy treats children as commodities to be sold or discarded is absurd. I received financial compensation for the care I provided and the expenses I incurred, not for the lives of the children. The children already belonged to their parents before they were entrusted to my temporary care and they were never mine to "sell." I was paid for the time and energy I spent following extensive medication protocol, attending appointments, and ensuring a healthy pregnancy for the children of relative strangers. I was not and could not be paid for the children themselves, as they were never mine.

My first surrogacy was a gratifying and empowering experience. Armed with knowledge and support, I was able to give an incredible gift to a wonderful family. The twins are now nearing four years old and are happy, healthy, thriving kids. I remain in contact with the intended parents and enjoy seeing how the care I provided helped them create their beautiful family. In fact, it was such a positive experience that I am currently in the process of a second surrogacy with another family.

It is insulting and degrading for others to assert that they need to "protect" me from surrogacy. I am a highly educated woman who rigorously researched surrogacy and obtained extensive legal and medical counsel prior to entering a surrogacy agreement. The surrogacy was overseen by an agency that went to great lengths to ensure that all involved parties understood the process and were in agreement about all aspects, especially the final outcome.

I do understand that there have been instances of exploitation and poorly arranged and executed surrogacy agreements. Appropriate regulation is the solution to avoid these occurrences, not a ban on surrogacy. When done correctly, as in my case, surrogacy is a beautiful service that benefits the surrogate, the intended parents, and the children who are born to parents who moved heaven and earth with great love to create their families. This pathway to parenthood, which for some is the only possible pathway, should not be taken away due to the few who have abused it. Instead, appropriate regulation can ensure that surrogacy is done safely, responsibly, and ethically, as it was in my case.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and consider my perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Wittrock

Traci Woolard

651.329.9244

419 4<sup>th</sup> St W, Hastings MN 55033

tjwool@hotmail.com

My name is Traci Woolard. I'm 43yrs old, have been married for almost 18yrs and have 4 children of my own. I live in Hastings MN now for the last 17 1/2yrs. My Representative is Rep. Denny MacNamara. In the Senate for my district is Sen. Katie Sieben. My husband and I have both attended college, though neither of us currently work in the fields we attended for. I work both a full time as well as part time job (can't give up the part time job...the discount is too good!!) Currently I earn between \$35,000-\$37,000 between the 2 jobs, and our combined household income this year will be over \$85,000. We are active members in our local United Methodist Church and have received a tremendous amount of support through my surrogacy's from the congregation members. I am a gestational surrogate, and have completed 3 surrogate pregnancies (2 singletons and a set of twins) and am currently carrying my last surrogate pregnancy. (another singleton)

I dealt with my own infertility for a number of years, and believing that I would never be able to carry a child was devastating to me. My best friend (of 30yrs) was also dealing with infertility. I miraculously became pregnant with my oldest son, and during that pregnancy, I had offered to be a surrogate for her, if she needed me. In the end, she didn't, but it was something that always stayed on my heart. After my husband and I had our last child, he encouraged me to look back into surrogacy and help couples build their families that couldn't any other way. I spent pretty darn close to a year researching surrogacy, IVF, talking to other surrogates, etc, prior to ever making the decision to move forward and take the next step.

For me, I treat the pregnancy as theirs, as much as possible. The parents have always been involved and a part of the decision making process. All of us went through a psychological evaluation, background checks, physical/medical screening, FDA testing, and we each had our own attorneys to assist us in the legal areas. We were comfortable that we did everything correctly and appropriately and had a high level of trust between us.

The parents and I had wonderful and fulfilling experiences during the pregnancy, and the births followed suit. My oldest was our "birth photographer" and captured everything, so that the parents were able to focus on the birth and their child/ren. Each time, he was able to capture the moment that I handed the parents their child for the 1st time. The look on their faces is the "WHY" for me. Why I do this. Why I support surrogacy. I can only imagine that I had that exact same look the 1st time I held each of my children, and being blessed to be able to be a part of such an amazing event is just priceless!!

There are significantly MORE positive stories and outcomes where surrogacy is concerned, a substantial number done here in MN. The negative stories that you hear are few and far between, but you hear about "those" stories because they sell papers and are great for shock value. Those stories, without fail, were NOT done following industry standard guidelines. Those are the ones that decided to "do it



themselves" without attorneys, without having background checks or psych. evaluations done. They didn't have valid contracts, if they had a contract at all. Many will print some internet "suggestion" up and use that as their contract, which doesn't protect anyone. Having specific and legal guidelines in place serves to protect the potential children born through surrogacy, the surrogates AND the intended parents. Putting these guidelines or requirements in place helps to ensure that the bad stories are much less likely to ever happen.

*I am not poor.*

My family and I do not receive any type of public assistance and are quite financially stable. We pay our bills, are able to feed/cloth/house our children without issue. We are able to do special things for our kids, send them to camp, take occasional trips, etc, without having to borrow, take out loans or take that money from other bills that need to be paid.

*I am not uneducated.*

I attended a major university and majored in Elementary Education, though I do not work in that field.

*I am not being repressed or taken advantage of by the "wealthy" to gestate their children; my intended parents could not have had a child without my help, and I sincerely and appropriately simply wanted to help them and give them that gift. Their economic status is irrelevant to me.*

None of the parents that I carried for were "rich". They were/are financially stable, but as I've carried for same-sex couples, they were unable to have a child of their own.

*I am not primarily motivated by, nor do I necessarily need, the money paid for my services.*

While the money may be a nice bonus, I remember what it felt like to believe that I would never have a child or family of my own. I KNOW the heartbreak and devastation of infertility. Having another option available for family building is important to me, and just because someone is infertile or gay or has a medical condition that prevents them from carrying a pregnancy should not prevent them from being able to have a biological child of their own.

*I did not get paid for a baby; I was paid a reasonable amount for my time, obligations, expenses, and services during the process of becoming pregnant and carrying the intended parents' pregnancy for them. This is no different than legislators being paid above and beyond their primary employment for their time and services in performing their duties for the people of Minnesota. Just as you are performing a civic duty by serving in the legislature (for which you should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of your motivation), I performed a service from the heart for the intended parents (and should be paid despite the primarily altruistic nature of my motivation).*

Nobody has an issue with the psychologists, attorneys, the RE's or other professionals getting paid for their services in creating a surrogacy arrangement, but when it comes to the surrogate being compensated for her time, the risks she is physically taking, the compromises expected of her family, all hell breaks loose. Yes, I chose to be a gestational surrogate of my own freewill and I took the risks upon myself willingly. That does not negate the fact that it takes a toll on a body and I worked HARD to make sure those pregnancies were as healthy as possible. The twin pregnancy was not a walk in the park and took a huge toll on my family. If not myself, THEY deserved something to acknowledge their role. Being reasonably compensated for these things and more, it fair.

*I am an assertive, independent woman who is perfectly capable of assessing the risks of surrogate pregnancy and making my own decision whether it is appropriate for me to take those risks to participate in a surrogacy arrangement. I do not need the government to intrude on my personal right to make decisions for myself based on the mistaken perception that I am especially vulnerable simply because I am a woman.*

I've been active in the surrogacy community for 10yrs, I run several groups and admin on a surrogacy website. I'm VERY vocal in advocating for surrogacy and ensuring that those looking to become a surrogate or IP follow industry standard guidelines. I help to educate others in the process, the risks involved and share my personal experiences. Anyone that has ever interacted with me will tell you that I'm a very assertive woman and I stand up for my rights. Especially when it comes to making decisions regarding my own body.

*I did not (or will not) sell "my" baby to the intended parents; I RETURNED the intended parents' baby to them after they temporarily placed him/her/them in my custody to gestate for them with the express understanding before I ever became pregnant that I would return their child(ren) to them when I had completed my task.*

Remember up above when I told you I have 4 children? I do NOT want A) any more children of \*my\* own and B) I do NOT want someone ELSE'S child!!! I have my family and we're good! It's also hard to sell something to someone that was never yours to begin with. These babies that I've carried are not, nor have they ever been "my" children. They were created using the sperm from their parents and an egg donor. The embryos created were THEIR embryos, NOT mine. I don't want what's not mine and I certainly couldn't even imagine trying to claim they are in any way "mine".

*I never viewed (or do not view) the child I gestated (or "am gestating" or "will gestate") for the intended parents as "my child;" I have always known and accepted that the child was the intended parents' child, and I had no adverse physical or psychological consequence or any reservations about giving the intended parents their child once it was born. It was natural and simply the way it should be.]*

See the answer above. Not bringing a baby home from the hospital was a wonderful feeling for me. (and the sleep was amazing!) I feel like I'm blessed to be able to be a part of the journey with those parents and knowing that I was able to help create a family for someone that so wanted one is a wonderful feeling. The pregnancies are "ok", the births are phenomenal and seeing the parents with their children is priceless.

Very Sincerely,

Mrs. Traci Woolard

651.329.9244

tjwool@hotmail.com

Amanda Wucher-Aller  
3284 Pepperridge Drive  
Antelope, CA 95843  
July 17, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Amanda Wucher-Aller, I have had honor of being a surrogate in 2014 and am currently carrying the sibling of the child I carried before. Both surrogate children are the biological offspring of their intended parents and of no relation to me.

My husband and I have been married for ten years and have three children. We have owned our own home for eight years and both work full time, my husband works for the government, and myself as a coordinator for a surrogacy company. At the time of our first surrogacy our family's annual income was \$80,000.

I have a Master's Degrees in Public Administration and bachelor's degrees in both Government and Environmental studies. My husband and I are both registered voters, members of the Methodist church, and very active in our community.

I have chosen to write this letter because I believe there are many misrepresentations about surrogates and surrogacies, and I feel they need to be addressed and dispelled. It has been proposed that surrogates are uneducated, poor and repressed women. That they find themselves in situations where they are taken advantage of by their wealthy intended parents and are abused.

I believe that the description of my demographic background shows that I am neither uneducated nor poor. I pride myself of my academic accomplishments as well as the success that my family has found. To assume that I am an uneducated or poor person based on the fact that I have chosen to do a surrogacy is deeply insulting and completely inaccurate. The statement that surrogates are all poor uneducated women is false and is a gross stereotype made in an attempt to imply that surrogates are victims who are forced into a situation.

We chose to do a surrogacy because we knew there were people in the world who could not have children. We knew that we were capable of helping these people and as a family we believe that when we see a problem that we can solve it is our duty to do it. We researched surrogacy, reached out to a surrogacy company and began a long detailed process. My husband and I were both given psychological evaluations, we met with multiple doctors who described the process of surrogacy, the pros and cons, and risks associated with it.

Once we were medically cleared we worked with our own attorney to create a contract. While our contract was agreed upon by both our family and our intended parents I controlled the fees and the rules that would govern my body. At no time was I pressured or bullied into ignoring my ethical and moral beliefs. At no point in time during my journeys have I ever felt repressed or taken advantage of. I always felt in control.

Committee regarding Surrogacy

July 17, 2016

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As I mentioned before I work for a surrogacy company. I have had the opportunity to experience surrogacy from multiple positions, as the surrogate and as the advocate and support for a surrogate. Because of this I can state that there is no one demographic of surrogate. Surrogates come from all walks of life, all races, economic status, education level and background. To state that they are all uneducated, poor repressed women is wrong.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Wucher-Aller

July 17, 2016

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Ron Kind is one of Wisconsin's State representatives  
Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin - Wisconsin's Senators

Hello, my name is Savannah York. I decided I wanted to be a gestational surrogate in 2013. My husband (30) and I (27) were finished making our family and I thought how great it would be to be pregnant again without the responsibility of taking care of another child. I loved being pregnant. We're not poor but we know, financially, we are comfortable supporting two children and still be able to enjoy life.

I was not paid to have a baby. I was compensated for my time just like anyone who is providing a service. Money was not a factor when I chose to be a surrogate. I gross \$50,000/year, without my spouse's income, working full time at a medical facility. I am currently pursuing a degree in HIT as part of my job growth; I am not uneducated.

I am so glad I carried a baby for a couple that couldn't get pregnant. It was so rewarding to see the aspiring parents see THEIR baby for the first time, fall in love with him at first sight. They share many photos with us and updates of the child. I never thought of the baby as mine, he wasn't mine; none of his DNA belonged to me. We knew going into being a surrogate that the child wasn't coming home with us.

I whole heartedly support surrogates and aspiring parents. As part of the process my husband and I were screened by a psychologist. She asked a variety of questions and deemed we were ready for the process of surrogacy. One of the questions she asked was if we understood this baby isn't ours, wasn't coming home with us and if that would be hard for us. I feel like a stronger person coming out of the process.

Thank you,  
Savannah York