



Dear Parent or (Other Concerned Guardian),

If you are reading this letter, then you have been informed that your daughter is pregnant. As difficult and upsetting to you as this information may be, there is hope and help for your daughter and you. Many organizations and groups, including Standing With You and The Justice Foundation, are available to help. You are not alone, and you are not the first to face this issue - there is hope. Positive, healthy outcomes are absolutely possible.

First, you should know that there are important new legal rights that your daughter, whether she is a minor or an adult, now possesses as a mother. Regardless of circumstances, your daughter is now the mother of a child in the womb, just as you were *her* mother or father before she was born.

As a mother, she has the fundamental right to direct the upbringing and education of her child (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925)). That right is hers - not anyone else's. Although you still have the legal duty to care for her, protect, and provide for her if she is a minor, she has the right to make decisions on behalf of your grandchild.

You (or any other person) may not lawfully force, coerce, or unduly influence or pressure your daughter to have an abortion. To do so could subject you to the criminal charge of fetal homicide (killing a baby while still in the womb) in the many states with fetal homicide laws. In other words, any third party (including a relative) who causes the baby to be killed against the will of his/her mother may be guilty of fetal homicide. See, for example, *Lawrence v. State*, 240 S.W.3d 912, (Tex Crim. App. 2007). You may also be prosecuted under the Federal Unborn Victims of Violence Act. A government official (ex. police officer, teacher, school counselor, social worker) who coerces "a minor to abort a child violates the minor's constitutionally protected freedom to choose whether to abort or bear her child." *Arnold v. Bd. of Ed. of Escambia County, Alabama*, 880 F.2d 305 (11th. Cir. 1989).

Although abortion is legal, you do not have the right to ***force, coerce, exert undue influence or unduly pressure*** your daughter to have an abortion. The United States Supreme Court makes it clear that an abortion decision by a minor or adult must be hers - free, voluntary, and non-coerced. See *Bellotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979). Force, excessive coercion, or duress may also subject you to reporting and prosecution for child abuse. Besides possible criminal prosecution, if you force, coerce, or exert undue pressure, then both you and the abortionist could be held liable for various civil torts, such as battery, negligence, false imprisonment, or other claims.

Some common examples of what would be, in our opinion, excessive coercion, force, duress, or involuntary undue influence might include one or more of the following:

1. "If you have this baby, I am kicking you out of my house." You do not have to support

your grandchild, but you do have to support **her** if she is a minor. The state and other groups may assist her with support for her child and his/her education. She also has the right to child support from the father of the child. You and/or she may be eligible for financial assistance from the state and other groups.

2. "No more talking, I am taking you for an abortion. I have made the appointment."
3. "You are my daughter and you will do what I say. You will have an abortion."
4. "I will beat you within an inch of your life if you don't stop this nonsense. You are not keeping this baby, and I don't care what you think." Any threat or infliction of violence is unlawful.
5. "If you don't have an abortion, I won't pay for your college." If you would otherwise pay for her college or other expenses, but you are cutting her off to impose your will, that is coercion or undue pressure.

Know that forcing your daughter to have an abortion against her will could cause tremendous damage to her and to your relationship with her. Many women have successfully completed their education while caring for a young child.

The Justice Foundation is a Christian organization that provides legal services at no charge to those in need, including many women who have been forced or pressured to have abortions and who suffered tremendously as a result. Again, there is hope! There are Pregnancy Resource Centers near you that provide confidential counseling. They also typically provide **free** ultrasounds, adoption information, parenting education, maternity and infant supplies, medical referrals, and other helpful services that will support you and boost your confidence. To find a pregnancy center near you, visit optionline.org or call 1-800-712-4357. We hope that this has been helpful to you and desire that you get all the help that you need.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Stone

Standing With You National Coordinator
[Standing With You](#)



Allan E. Parker

President, Attorney
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Disclaimer: This is intended as general legal information and education, not specific legal advice. Individual situations and state laws may vary. Contact a local attorney of your choosing for specific legal advice.