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To Sen. Maye Quade and the MN Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee:

My name is Clare Sorman and I am the owner and program director of The Surrogacy Center. For the past 7 years I have been helping to build families here in Minnesota and the Midwest by assisting Intended Parents in achieving their lifelong dreams of parenthood. There are two groups of folks we serve – hetero couples who have experienced major infertility issues and LGBTQ+ couples who need assistance in building their families for obvious reasons. For our clients fighting infertility battles, most of them have gone through years of heartache, failed transfers, losses and the associated grief that comes with not being able to carry a pregnancy. IVF helps these couples achieve their dreams and gestational surrogacy opens the door for them to make the impossible possible.

Our Gestational Carriers who are matched with these Intended Parents are carefully screened, altruistic women who become surrogates to help others who are unable to have children on their own. They all do this because they are passionate about helping people and are *never* coerced into acting as a surrogate. They deserve the compensation they receive due to the nature of the situation and everything they have to go through to help deserving Intended Parents achieve these dreams. Our agency – as well as every surrogacy agency I'm aware of – adheres closely to the rigorous surrogacy guidelines set forth by the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM). And as of today, there is only ONE state – Louisiana – that disallows compensated gestational surrogacy, since Michigan reversed their law just this week to allow for it. I have faith that by the end of the year, all 50 states will allow for it.

In the years I have been working with these families and the 22 years The Surrogacy Center has existed, we have had ZERO clients who have expressed regret or dismay about the process in any way. We have had no lawsuits or actions promulgated against us. As a member of SEEDS, the national ethical organization overseeing best practices in surrogacy, the experience is the same. You may hear from anti-surrogacy groups that the process isolates and commoditizes women, which could not be further from the truth. They will cherry-pick data they found on Google and will give more rare examples where folks have had negative experiences and try to paint a picture that this is the norm, which is ultimately driven by willful misinformation in order to disguise a particular agenda. They will equate surrogacy to child trafficking, baby-brokering, and even slavery – which is an egregious representation of what this process actually is and does, and is woefully misinformed and even insulting.

Here are some direct quotes from our clients (using initials to protect their privacy):

IPs JP and PC:

We have been trying to start a family for four years, but have unfortunately experienced several heartbreaking losses along the way including our son at 19 weeks and our daughter at 29 weeks. We have so much love to give and we are so excited to finally become parents. We are in awe of your generosity and so grateful for your willingness to give us the biggest gift we could ever hope to receive.

IPs JM and JO:

Family is the cornerstone of our lives and we have always had the dream of becoming parents ourselves. This journey wouldn't be possible for us without the incredible gift of surrogacy and the selfless individual who will be carrying our future child. We are endlessly grateful for their compassion and courage.

GCLS:

I will admit that in spite of using IVF to build my own family, I was ignorant to what surrogacy really involved. It's not some far-fetched celebrity status act. Surrogacy is a beautiful team effort between willing carriers and the entrusting, grateful Intended Parents. When I realized surrogacy was on my heart, I knew I needed to find an agency that viewed surrogacy not as a business transaction, but a safe, ethical, and meaningful journey. Knowing that my own family and my Intended Parents were legally protected by all the what-if scenarios and uncertainty that a pregnancy can yield gave me great peace of mind as we navigated the medical side of surrogacy.

GC HM:

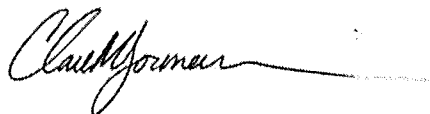
I struggled with infertility with my husband for many years and I know how hard it is. When I was 38 I decided I wanted to try IVF. I was very lucky to have success and now have three little boys who I love so much. I decided to become a gestational carrier because I still remember the struggle and disappointment of infertility. My life has changed so much with the births of my children and I'd love to help change your lives in the same wonderful way.

GC LL:

(To IPs): I want you to know that I think you're incredibly courageous people and I admire your strength. I also want you to know that I understand what incredible trust you are placing in me and I do not take it lightly. Becoming a surrogate for you is a journey I have embarked upon with great joy and a deep sense of purpose.

Now that you have heard directly from some of the incredible people we have worked with, I hope you will consider moving forward with this standalone surrogacy bill in order to codify and clarify best practices as they currently exist today in Minnesota in this area of the law. Surrogacy isn't going away and will only continue to grow as a family-building option, so we believe it is integral to protect all parties involved by codifying it into state law and allowing Minnesota families to safely and securely explore the option of surrogacy to build their families.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clare M. Sorman", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Clare M. Sorman
Owner and Director