

February 20, 2019

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As women who have chosen to become gestational surrogates for New York intended parents, we want to thank you for your support of the Child-Parent Security Act. Our support for this legislation comes from our firsthand experience in enabling families in your state to have children of their own. There are few things as rewarding as seeing a parent hold a newborn baby for the first time and knowing that you brought that life into the world for them.

We have come to this issue from different backgrounds and perspectives, but we share the universal belief that everyone who dreams of having a family should be able to do so. Advances in medicine over the past three decades have made biological parenthood possible for so many who would never have been able to have children before – but science can only take us so far. For many hopeful parents, surrogacy is their only option.

To understand how we view our role as gestational surrogates (this means that we have no genetic relationship with the child), it's helpful to understand how we chose this path. All of us are lucky to have families of our own. We know the incomparable joy that comes from raising a child, and also know – from our experiences with intended parents -- the deep pain that comes when you are told that parenthood isn't possible for you.

The decision to serve as a surrogate is not one that any of us entered into lightly. We each researched the science and the legal guidelines, learned about the experiences of other surrogates, and have thought deeply about the commitment and process involved. For us, it comes down to giving the gift of life to people who want nothing more than to raise children of their own.

Not everyone understands surrogacy. For some, their notions of surrogacy are rooted in outdated practices or beliefs that were abandoned decades ago. Thankfully, times have changed. It's important that people know that the primary motivation for each of us, and for all the surrogates we've come into contact with, is helping a family, not financial reward.

Some even believe that gestational surrogacy is a potential evil to be foisted upon unaware or vulnerable women.

But surrogacy today is a partnership -- between the surrogate, the intended parent(s), doctors and nurses, and the surrogacy agency. We all get to know one another, see if we're a good match, and then work together through this process of bringing a baby into the world. Nearly all of us

maintain close relationships with the families that we worked with, exchanging holiday and birthday cards and sharing (at least through photographs) milestones with one another.

Best practices have been established that protect both surrogates and intended parents, and the Child-Parent Security Act wisely follows those guidelines and enshrines them into New York law.

The Child-Parent Security Act includes comprehensive protections for surrogates. The bill would protect our right to make decisions regarding our own health or that of the fetus or embryo. It would also ensure that we have our own legal representation. These are commonsense policies that are rooted in the shared experiences of surrogates over the past thirty plus years.

It's incomprehensible to us that a woman who wants to serve as a gestational surrogate and help a family bring a baby into the world, and who meets the rigorous screening process of a surrogacy agency to ensure suitability, would be prevented by state law from being able to do so. Whose interest is that serving? Certainly not that of prospective surrogates, nor of intended parents.

We understand better than anyone what it takes to be a surrogate – and what it means to families who rely on surrogacy to have children. On behalf of these families, we thank you for your steadfast support.

Sincerely,

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Rocklin, CA

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cc: Members of the New York State Assembly
 Members of the New York State Senate