



## **Advocacy Talking Points for Vista Maria**

### **Introduction**

- My name is [**Your Name**], and I am a constituent in [**Your Location**].
- I am a [**Volunteer/Foster Parent/Supporter, etc.**] of Vista Maria in Dearborn Heights, Michigan.
- Vista Maria provides life-changing support to families and youth in foster care, young people aging out of the system, and youth who have experienced trauma related to abuse, neglect, or human trafficking.

### **Outline Your Concerns**

- The federal funding crisis is threatening organizations that provide essential support to our most vulnerable youth.
- Federal funding, allocated through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, provides safe housing, mental health services, and independent living programs for youth in the communities you represent.
- Without adequate funding, organizations like Vista Maria may be forced to reduce or eliminate some life-saving services.
- Thousands of young people in your district could lose access to mental health treatment, safe housing, and educational and employment support—ultimately increasing their risk of homelessness, exploitation, and further trauma.

### **Describe Your Personal Connection**

- As someone who has witnessed the challenges that youth in foster care face, I feel a deep responsibility to speak out.
- As a [**foster parent/mentor/advocate, etc.**], I have seen firsthand the positive impact of strong support systems.
- I believe that every child deserves a safe and nurturing environment in which to thrive.

### **Make a Request ("Please...")**

- Oppose any proposals that would cut or delay funding for foster care services and youth mental health treatment. Our youth cannot afford any setbacks.
- Do everything possible to ensure these programs receive the critical resources they need.
- Advocate for the full restoration of federal funding for programs that provide safe housing, mental health care, and support for youth in foster care and those aging out of the system.
- Ensure that organizations like Vista Maria, which rely on federal funding, do not face budget shortfalls that would force them to reduce critical services for youth.
- Support stable funding for organizations serving youth who have faced trauma and ensure that mental health services are always available.

### **Closing**

- By securing funding for foster care, mental health treatment, and transitional living programs, you will be investing in the safety and future success of our vulnerable youth.
- Your leadership in restoring federal funding will ensure youth in care have access to housing, mental health support, and the resources they need to succeed.
- It is critical that organizations like Vista Maria, which depend on federal funding, do not experience budget cuts that could jeopardize their ability to deliver essential services.
- Immediate action is needed—restoring funding can protect our youth from losing access to critical lifelines.