

7. AirBaby

Wanting to secure the best possible future for her child, Sue started making plans soon after she learned she was pregnant. Sue knew that acquiring excellent prenatal care, maintaining a good diet, and living in a safe and healthy environment wouldn't be difficult due to the ample financial resources she enjoyed. But Sue wanted something more for her child—something that, technically speaking, couldn't be purchased—she wanted her child to be a US citizen. So Sue, a Chinese national living in Shanghai, started searching the Internet and laying the groundwork to participate in the burgeoning field of maternity tourism. When the time came, Sue would fly to the United States and stay in what was promoted as a lovely small hotel, explicitly set up for the needs of new and expectant mothers, while waiting for the birth of her child.

Approximately one month after the birth, Sue and her baby would return to mainland China and resume normal life. As a US citizen, her child will qualify for enrollment in the highly exclusive international schools in China as well as more easily travel to the US for high school or college. At twenty- one years of age, her child can petition the US government to grant her parents permanent residence, thereby starting their own process to US citizenship. The price for the package Sue chose is steep—between \$40,000 and \$50,000—though this includes assistance with obtaining the necessary visa, transportation, housing, and other amenities once in the United States. But Sue is confident that she'll be getting her money's worth.

Alice would also like to travel to the United States to deliver her baby, but she lacks the resources to pay for any of the well-advertised and seemingly well run maternity hotels on the West coast. By scouring the Internet she learns that she can also secure US citizenship for her child by giving birth on the island of Saipan, one of the Northern Marianas islands and a US territory. Travel to Saipan from China would be much less expensive than travel to California, and the costs of lodging in Saipan would be much less than the advertised costs of maternity lodging in California as well. Further, in an effort to promote tourism to the Marianas in general, US immigration policy allows foreigners to stay in the Marianas for up to forty-five days without first obtaining a visa. This will also reduce costs. And although maternity tourism isn't as well developed in Saipan as it is California, Alice views it as her only affordable option.

Amy, born and raised in California, also wants to secure the best future for her children, and wants to get into the business of maternity tourism. In particular, she wants to rent the upstairs unit of her two-flat to pregnant women from abroad to enjoy a birthing "vacation." Her guests may stay as long as it takes to give birth in the United States and recover enough to return home. Amy cannot offer the range of amenities that the luxury maternity hotels offer, but she can promise the availability of baby supplies, names and numbers of midwives or birthing assistants, and transportation, as well as availability to address unexpected developments. Amy reasons that she can charge double to triple what she would normally charge for short-term rental of the upstairs unit. And even after paying the appropriate taxes on her new small business, the additional net income will help Amy better provide for her own children. Currently maternity tourism is legal in the United States. The United States and Canada are among a handful of countries that still grant citizenship as a consequence of being born in that country. In the United States, the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees this birthright. Further, US immigration policy currently does not regard an advanced pregnancy as grounds for denying someone a tourist visa. Still, some Americans object to private business taking profit

from the sale of access to citizenship, while others object to the circumvention of existing immigration policy.

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