

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee – thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 496.

My husband and I are a part of an Amish community in Vinton County, Ohio. I myself have 6 children all delivered at home by a midwife. Our community is located in a very rural part of Ohio. We are about 35 minutes by car from the nearest place to get routine prenatal care and a hospital. We do not drive and it can be very difficult and costly to arrange a driver to get to regular prenatal visits. Midwives are a very important part of our lives, as our mothers are much more likely to get regular care since the midwives can come to us in our homes making it possible to get the care we need.

This routine care can be life saving for our community. When my daughter was pregnant and planning a home birth with her first child, our local midwife was providing routine care for her and was able to help us arrange to get my daughter an ultrasound. It was in that ultrasound that a serious defect was seen called a Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia or CDH. This is where the baby has a life-threatening hole in the diaphragm. Because our midwife helped us to discover the CDH, she was able to help our daughter change her plan and arrange to have a hospital birth in Columbus where there is a NICU and Children's hospital nearby. After our grandson was born in the hospital, he was taken immediately to the Children's Hospital where he had two surgeries to fix the CDH and was in the hospital for 10 weeks getting the care he needed to survive. Had our midwife not had ways to help us get an ultrasound for our daughter, our grandson Michael would not be with us.

It is very important for the well-being of our women and babies that we can have a midwife who is legally able to order ultrasounds and provide lifesaving medications. Again, as we are very far from any hospital, legal access to medications in the case of a hemorrhage can be the difference between life and death for our mothers.

Our community has a midwife who has provided prenatal care for my children and delivered our grandchildren and is a very intelligent midwife with high standards. My husband and I feel it is very important for midwives to be totally legalized so they can do their jobs fully. This is why we are in support HB 496. Thank you for your help and support that you show our Amish communities.

Sincerely,

Saloma and Harley Yoder