

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

I am the mother of a nearly two-year old and currently pregnant with my second child. I have received midwifery care in both of my pregnancies and my first child was born at home under midwifery supervision. I am planning a home birth with my second child as well.

When I learned I was pregnant with my first child, research into my prenatal and birth care options led me to a practice of home birth midwives in my city. I chose home birth for many reasons—lower cost, highly personalized care, and the comfort of being able to deliver my child in my own home and away from the at times restrictive and not always evidence-based policies used in hospitals. When the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns began a month before I was due to deliver my son, I was so grateful that I would not have to worry about the uncertainty of being in a hospital setting potentially exposed to a highly contagious virus. I had a physically safe, emotionally-supported, and successful birth in my own home in April 2020. I am currently expecting my second child any day now, and am planning another home birth with the same midwifery group.

There have been multiple studies published that demonstrate the safety of home birth under the care of trained midwives. The licensure of midwives within our state will allow trained midwives to address some of the risks inherent to any birth by allowing them access to emergency medications, allow for smoother transfers to a hospital in the case of emergency, and the access to routine medications such as vitamin K and RhoGAM. I chose my midwifery practice because they were highly trained, competent providers. Licensure through the passing of HB 496 will allow more women and families access to high quality care providers that have met a standard for training and experience, ensure full informed consent about their care, and put safeguards in place to ensure accountability and safe midwifery practices.

I hope that the legal protection offered to midwives through HB 496 will incentivize more people to enter into the profession, allowing greater and more equitable access to this type of prenatal and birth care across our state. My own experience with midwifery care and home birth has been transformative, and I would love to see the introduction of more protections for both midwives and clients expand the reach of this type of care.

The expansion of safety and equity to both midwives and Ohio families are why I am in support of HB 496

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