

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 name is Anna Geimeier. I am a birth educator and mother of two. Both of my pregnancies and births were attended by midwives.

Birth is a transformative experience. Arguably the single most transformative experience in life. Birthing people deserve choice in birth. They deserve to decide who attends their birth and their birth location. Evidence supports midwifery care and homebirth for low-risk women. Licensing midwives allows them to access medications and prenatal testing that can further increase the safety of midwifery care and homebirth. For example, by allowing a midwife to order, carry, and administer medications to stop postpartum hemorrhage can reduce risk to birthing women choosing midwife-attended homebirth, avoid postpartum hospital transfers, and prevent mother/baby separation.

I was lucky to have the experience of midwifery care and homebirth with a qualified midwife team. The care I received was thorough and empowering. During my first birth, my midwife recognized an abnormality during my labor and made a call to transfer me to a hospital in case intervention outside of her scoop become necessary. In my case, the transfer experience was thankfully a good one but for many, transfer can be a nightmare where continuity of care is disrupted and birthing people may feel compelled to lie or conceal details to avoid being shamed or perceived as irresponsible; and that reality results in avoiding care out of fear.

Licensing and regulating midwives empowers families and allows families to seek the birth they want without unnecessary risks.

There is a demand for midwifery care and out of hospital birth. Midwife licensure protects those who seek such care. This is why I am in support of HB 496.

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