

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 a Certified Professional Midwife with a masters degree in midwifery, an IBCLC Lactation Consultant, and a Trauma Resolution Therapist specializing in the childbearing year. I have also been a professor at the Midwives College of Utah since 2010, and serve on national midwifery boards.

Practicing out-of-institution midwifery in Ohio has been challenging at best since I ran a busy practice in the early 2000s without transparency or continuity of care with other care providers, to when I sat in a courthouse and witnessed a CPM being tried for practicing medicine and advanced practice nursing without a license with a jury who knew very little about birth in general, and even less about the particularities of homebirth. This am supportive of this legislation as it puts us in step with the majority of other states (Ohio will have to, at some point, have legislation for midwives), allows many routes of entry and a reasonable amount of time for those who want to become licensed, provides a framework for transparency and continuity of care without disabling requirements, and creates a board of peers. Another important piece for me is that this legislation will make it more possible for licensed midwives to provide care for those who struggle to even find out that homebirth with an experienced midwife is an option, much less be able to afford it. It has been too many years of only those with the correct connections being able to access this care—and only those with the means to pay being able to afford it. Finally, this bill makes being a homebirth midwife a viable career choice. So many of us feel this work is "a calling" and figure out ways to make it work even in a neutral or even hostile environment. There are many individuals who want to pursue midwifery as a career (as well as, or instead of, as a calling), and there are many others who would love to become out-of-institution midwives, but need to know that they will not be demonized and/or punished in an unlegislated state.

These are some of the many reasons I am in support of HB496.

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