

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 Ruth Reveal, and I gave birth to my son at home in April 2020. My birth was attended by a Certified Professional Midwife, two midwife assistants, a doula, and my husband and mother.

Before choosing to pursue a birth at home, my husband and I did extensive research on the types of midwives, the benefits of the midwifery model of care, and the statistics on interventions in a hospital vs. at home. At first we did not realize that there was not a state licensure available for midwives, but the benefits of the care model for us far outweighed that fact. We chose a Certified Professional Midwife with enormous amounts of experience, training, and education. At the same time, we chose to seek parallel care with an OB/GYN who would be able to prescribe labs and ultrasounds that could be covered by our insurance.

Our prenatal care experience with our midwife was unparalleled. Every question and concern was answered with care and in consideration of my health, history, diet, and best practices. I was always given enough time and information to make decisions with my partner and midwife, instead of feeling that decisions were made for me. In comparison, my OB/GYN appointments were short and impersonal. The labs and ultrasounds that I desired were not explained to me or shared with any transparency. It is so important that people who choose to birth at home also have access to licensed providers who can provide the connection to medications, labs, and ultrasounds.

The birth of my son at home was a transformative and empowering experience. The support of my midwife, doula, and family helped me access strength I did not know existed in me. Throughout my relatively short labor of 4.5 hours, my midwife was unobtrusively supportive, intermittently monitoring my and the baby's vitals. I never worried about my or my baby's safety because I knew she had the training and intimate knowledge of my history and pregnancy to address any issues as they arose. HB 496 ensures that this high standard of care is accessible and legally protected for people who chose to use midwives as their care providers. The bill ensures a standard of training and experiences that we painstakingly researched before hiring our midwife. HB 496 gives other birthing people the immense power of choice. In the transformative life experience that is giving birth, people should have as much information, power, and choice that they can access. This bill makes all of those things more accessible.

This is why I am in support of HB 496.

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