

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 Jameesa Smoot. I am a mother to three children ages 5, 2 and 1. My youngest was born at home with the care of a team of Midwives. I am also a childbirth and postpartum Doula.

I support licensing and regulating midwives because families deserve options for childbirth and with those options should come equal access to routine procedures that can maximize the safety of these families. For families like mine who want this option, we should not have to go through leaps and bounds to get ultrasounds or even need parallel care from OBs in order to process these procedures. This makes access more challenging. Another reason I support licensing and regulating is because midwifery is low cost compared to hospital fees. I have a lot of medical debt because it cost so much more to birth in hospitals. Midwifery care will continue to be an option so it is better that it is regulated and legally recognized so that healthcare providers can work together. Families should not have to fear resistance from hospital staff or fear of telling providers that they are getting care from a midwife at home due to stigmatization and the idea that it is somehow unregulated or unsafe. I loved being able to get safe and competent care in my own home and have my baby in the place I felt the safest and most confident.

I am in support of HB 496 because it will increase the safety and acceptance of home midwifery care within the medical community and larger society. It will allow midwife care to continue to be a low risk, low cost option for families to do what has been done for centuries. By legalizing midwifery care, midwives will be legally protected and it will likely increase access to midwives in our state and community.

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