

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 DEM who is currently serving the Dayton area with the intent of obtaining my certification as well as licensure once available.

I support HB 496 because it allows access for currently practicing midwives to further improve the outcomes for birthing families as well as the communities that they serve. By having access to life-saving medications as well as the ability to refer for timely tests we can help keep birth affordable, low-risk, and safe for new families. HB 496 will help midwives in their efforts to protect the families that slip through the cracks in traditional healthcare settings. The religious, the isolated, those who struggle with meeting ends, and the families who live in areas where hospitals are not within safe proximity for families who have previously not been able to make it to the nearest facility equipped for labor and delivery. Since practicing midwives are skilled in ongoing postpartum care, being knowledgeable in basic lactation assistance helps families who choose to breastfeed their children gain an advantage of having a care provider who is available at all times for the first six weeks of life. This is important for improving the well being of not only the family, but offers some relief to strained programs such as WIC as well as provides further continuity of care.

My hope for HB 496 is that it is the first step in making midwifery care accessible to all families. Because I believe that if you give individualized care to birthing people, you can change the communities that change the world.

Lindsey Stidham