

Dear Madam Chairman and Committee Members,

As a public health professional, a homebirth mother, and an Ohio citizen I am concerned about and am interested in the purpose of HB 496. Midwives have been serving Ohio families for centuries with wonderful statistics when it comes to mother and baby prenatal, birth, and postnatal care which begs the question, what is the point of this bill?

Additionally, I am seriously concerned with some areas of the bill and suggest the following changes:

- there should be an exemption for Traditional/Direct Entry midwives without involving religion,
- the penalty should be reduced to a misdemeanor rather than a felony, and
- birthing women/families must have the freedom to choose the midwife they desire, regardless of credentials and licensure status without getting her into trouble.

I also encourage you to reach out to Traditional/Direct Entry midwives as well as those they have served. As someone who has had two hospital and one homebirth, I can say that the care I received during my pregnancy, birthing time, and after was more thorough and of much greater quality than I received from my hospital/clinic care. Also note the cost comparison for homebirths vs. hospital births.

Lastly, I encourage you to review the research on and use of midwifery in Ohio, the U.S., and around the world. As a public health professional, I believe HB 496 would further perpetuate the already dismal maternal and fetal health statistics that we currently see in Ohio and the U.S.

Kind Regards,  
Aubrey Whewell PhD, MPH  
Ottawa Hills, Ohio 43606