

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 496.

My name is Christie Taylor. I am currently pregnant with my first child and planning a home birth with a CPM. Given the direct impact on my life this bill is incredibly important to me. I am writing you today to share my concerns with how parts of the bill are currently written.

First, I think that the purpose behind this bill and why it was introduced is commendable. Currently there isn't a law in place protecting those serving as midwives outside of a hospital setting. This bill would legally recognize Certified Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives as legitimate caregivers. This not only protects them as the care provider, but also the families choosing to birth outside of a hospital.

Despite agreeing with the majority of the bill as currently written, there are a few parts that are of grave concern to me. As currently written, Certified Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives would be licensed through the Board of Nursing. The Board of Nursing is a medical board and makes decisions through the lens of modern medicine. Personally, I am choosing a home birth because I do not want a modern approach to birth. There are many benefits to both mom and baby when birthing in a more traditional way, which Certified Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives are able to provide in a home setting. As statistics show and as Representative Koehler stated when introducing the bill, these midwives are currently providing a great service to the community and birthing families. We should not limit their abilities to do so. Although modern medicine may be needed in some instances, birth is natural and should not be treated like a medical event. I am concerned that the rules the Board of Nursing would put in place for Certified Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives would limit the benefits typically gained by birthing outside of a hospital, as well as tie the hands of midwives to treat birth more like a medical event instead of the miracle that it is. A separate board strictly dedicated to midwives should be established for licensure. The Board of Nursing should not be regulating professionals who are not nurses.

The bill as currently written protects the right to birth VBACs, twins, and breech babies at home, even though in hospital settings these are considered higher risk pregnancies/deliveries. It doesn't protect against the mother's age. More and more women are starting families later in life, into their 30s. I myself am currently pregnant with my first at the age of 33. However, starting at age 35 you are considered high risk by conventional medical professionals. This should not automatically risk you out of a home birth and should be added to section 4723.581 of the bill to protect the mother's rights to choose where to birth her baby, no matter what her age.

Again, I think the majority of this bill is well written and will protect those midwives working outside of a hospital setting. However, we also need to ensure we are protecting the families who are choosing to birth in a more traditional way and continue to give them proper choices without a medical board's interference. Because this bill is so important we should not rush it through and ensure we get it correct, where all parties are protected. It is for these reasons that I am currently against HB 496. However, with a few minor adjustments I would be in support of the bill.

Thank you for your time,

Christie Taylor