

Dear Representative(s),

As a home birthing mother, I have taken an interest in HB 496. After studying it, I am curious if you are aware of all the detrimental effects that this Bill would place on home birthing families like my own.

I am a pediatric nurse at a Cleveland hospital. I know my options of where I could potentially give birth. The beautiful thing is the fact that I have options. As I was a low risk pregnant woman who wanted very little intervention, I sought out a trained, highly skilled home birth midwife who has been in practice for decades. She was even the midwife for 2 of my sisters, one of whom used her almost 2 decades prior. This midwife skillfully and proficiently delivered my 3 children. My family will forever be grateful for her, as a practicing midwife, for helping to bring forth the lives of my children into this world in a safe and beautiful way.

If this House Bill 496 were to pass, it would make my experienced midwife illegal to practice, and midwives like her, who are trained but not to the standards of the Ohio Board of Nursing. But that is my choice, to choose someone who I did not mind was not certified by the Ohio Board of Nursing. As an Ohio Board certified nurse myself, I completely understand the differences in the training of a hospital birth vs. home birth; homebirth trained midwives skills are becoming a lost art, they are so specific in what they witness and what they have been prepared to handle, that I would only trust someone specifically trained for home births. Some of these midwives have been successfully providing families with excellent care for years, why are we trying to take these choices away from families with this bill? This is complete government overreach. Why can't Certified Nurse Midwives, approved by the Ohio Board of Nursing, practice in home births alongside these other direct-entry midwives? And then why can't we let the mothers decide who they would like to choose to deliver their babies. Why does it have to be one or the other? All that does is take choices away from women and their families, and put many skilled midwives out of work.

I hear the intentions of House Bill 496 were designed to help women, but all it would actually do, in summary, is take away choices from home birthing families, provide government overreach, and take away jobs from midwives who have successfully been doing this for years. This bill seems completely unnecessary and potentially harmful. I fear what the future would hold if this bill passes for not only the home birthing families, but for the midwives as well. I hope you take all of this into consideration when voting on this Bill as it is currently written, for the hundreds of Ohioans that this would be negatively affecting.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mandy Benander Heinrich  
Cleveland, Ohio resident