

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 India Stringer. I'm currently a student midwife supporting the Buckeye birth coalition. House bill 496 will provide safe home birthing options to families in Ohio. Today I would like to share an insight on my personal experience in my midwifery apprenticeship and why I support house bill 496.

I became a birth worker in early 2020 as a birth assistant. I had zero knowledge about midwifery or home birth, I just wanted to help. Due to the pandemic, my dear friend who had just completed her midwifery apprenticeship, was urged to open a midwifery practice because of the growing need for home birth midwives, specifically black midwives. After around ten amazing births, I was convinced home birth was a safe option. Between the 10-20th birth I attended, the baby was born very limp. It was obvious he needed some support. This was the first time I had physically seen any resuscitation performed on a newborn. The midwife quickly responded and asked for the necessary tools to support the baby while calmly explaining what she was doing. After some suction and a few breaths, the baby was breathing and his heart rate was back to baseline. The midwife credited her efficiency on the numerous seminars and courses she's attended such as the Birth Emergency Skills Training. This experience made me want to have additional training as a birth assistant in the event we encountered a more severe situation. It was suggested that I become a Certified Professional Midwife.

I began my midwifery apprenticeship in January 2021. I'm currently a PEP student. This means that I gain my training through a set amount of clinicals under an experienced midwife. Once I have completed the required clinicals, I must take an exam administered through NARM in order to become a Certified Professional Midwife. This process ensures that I have the proper skills and knowledge to service my families. I've had individualized training with three licensed CNMs, two licensed CPMs and a Community Midwife. Two of these midwives serve on the Kentucky Midwives Advisory Council to the Board of nursing. Just like Doctors, all of the providers I've had the pleasure of working with stay up to date with their certifications and attend seminars on a routine basis surrounding pregnancy, birth and postpartum. I'm currently up to date with my NRP and CPR certification. I have attended a cultural ethics and lactation course. I have been invited to 84 home births, and delivered 30 cute babies. I have attended numerous prenatal and postpartum visits. I'll be a Certified Professional Midwife in 2023 serving my hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio and the surrounding cities. HB 496 would legally allow me to carry and administer the appropriate medication to service my clients.

In my experience and observation under the care of skilled, professional, hands, birth is safe at home. I look forward to the continued conversation of midwifery and home birth in the state of Ohio. Thank you for your time.