

Dear Ohio Legislature,

In 2020, there was a 22% increase in the rate of home birth as we faced unprecedented times in our world, and especially hospitals in Ohio. Women and families had the freedom to choose their providers and place of birth during these times. Homebirth practices across the state grew exponentially as childbearing families were searching for alternatives to the restricted and potentially unsafe hospital environments. This is something to be celebrated and applauded: Families looking “outside the box” to provide the best birthing environment to welcome their babies into the world.

Given the recent restrictions and COVID-19 protocols enforced in hospitals over the last two years, this is not the time for a bill to further restrict women’s rights. It is vital that every woman has the opportunity to “birth” their own way. That is what my midwives give to their families on a daily basis. By impairing that right, you are directly impeding the mother’s wishes for her birthing experience.

Our goals should all be the same. Healthy mother’s and healthy babies. As a mother of two healthy babies, one being a hospital birth, and one being a home birth, the care we received as a family with our midwives preparing for the home birth was incomparable. We grew as a family unit stronger and closer through the entire experience alongside our midwives. We were treated as individuals (not numbers), and felt our needs were being met at every angle. Our midwives empowered us, educated us, listened to us, and with the help of the mighty hand of God, our home birth came alive with the miracle of life right before our eyes. Without our midwifery team, we would be subjected to an industry that doesn’t put God and family first, and that doesn’t individualize care, and frankly, an industry many do not want to be affiliated with, our family being one of them.

Trust in the medical care system is extremely fractured and rightfully so. There is a growing desire for individualized care, and direct-entry midwives have proven to demonstrate professional, safe, and individualized care for centuries in the state of Ohio and have had amazing results!

I urge you to make critical amendments to HB496 that would allow women and families the freedom to choose their provider and place of birth regardless of the credentials and licensure status.

Sincerely,  
The Beilharz family  
Blaine, Ali, William, Brody, & Ziggy