



State Senator PAULA HICKS-HUDSON

Serving Ohio's 11th State Senate District

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chairman Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for House Bill 402, the Ohio Midwife Practice Act. This bill would establish a method of regulating the midwifery profession in Ohio.

Midwives are essential professionals who participate in improving maternal health for women who would prefer to give birth in the comfort of their home, rather than in a health care facility. They are trained to assist women through the process of labor, delivering the baby, and caring for the infant after birth. The responsibility associated with supporting a woman through such a momentous event is tremendous, but currently, midwives are not regulated in Ohio. In other words, women seeking to employ a midwife to supervise their birth must either trust that the midwife is being truthful about their training or do their own investigation into the midwife's qualifications.

This bill, among many things, will make this information far more accessible to those women who prefer a home birth. It establishes a requirement that the midwife obtain a client's informed consent before they can assist with the birth by mandating that they brief the client on several important pieces of information, including their education and training, a description of the services they will provide, and whether they are covered by professional liability insurance. Our hope is that this bill will ensure those who choose to give birth outside of a hospital or birthing center still receive the best care available.

In drafting this legislation, former Representative Boyd and I made sure to consult with midwives and maternal healthcare providers and seek their guidance. We have received feedback on this bill from both of these groups, along with citizens voicing their hopes that this bill will increase the chances for a better birth experience and put the health and wellness of mothers and babies at the forefront.

Overall, our objective for this bill is to aid in growing the midwifery practice so that more women are able to choose this health care option for their families or as a career path. We want to support women in choosing the best healthcare provider for themselves knowing that for many pregnant women, that provider is their midwife. With that, I thank you for your consideration of my testimony on this bill and welcome any questions you may have.