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From the desk of:

Riordan McClain
State Representative

Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for inviting us to provide sponsor testimony for H.B. 545.

Midwifery has been a practice throughout all of history and has shown time and time again that it is a vital service for our communities. Representative Miller and I wanted to build upon H.B. 496 from the last General Assembly. We've used the licensure framework from that bill and added some protections for traditional (lay) midwives.

Issues like maternity healthcare deserts are increasing in our rural communities and we hope that this bill will help address those issues.

In Ohio, it is difficult for many midwives to be recognized and practice their skills as they have been trained. H.B. 545 seeks to recognize and provide a new licensure for midwives who wish to do so. It also makes sure that traditional (lay) midwives can continue to operate without licensure as they always have as long as they receive informed consent to their clients and carry out their limited scope of work. Most notably, prohibiting the administration of drugs.

This bill has been crafted with the help of many midwife groups input and recommendations to accommodate the most practitioners. At the end of the day, we want to promote healthy environments for pregnant women to receive great prenatal care, safe birthing options, and knowledge about those choices.

The miracle of birth is an awe-inspiring event and isn't simply a procedure to be rushed as long as mom and baby are doing well. Midwives provide a time-tested approach to prenatal care and childbirth that guides the mother through the natural processes to bringing a healthy baby from their womb into their arms.

This bill is about setting up the licensure process, an advisory committee to oversee midwives moving forward, and protecting all midwives to allow them to do what they do best, bring life into our world.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I will turn it over to Representative Miller to go into more details on what the bill does.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Riordan McClain".