

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.

I am a Certified Professional Midwife and home birth consumer providing written proponent testimony for HB496. I have 4 children, two of whom were born at home with midwives (CPMs).

As a certified professional midwife and consumer, I have a great deal of first hand knowledge regarding why this bill is beneficial and crucial to improving outcomes in the state of Ohio. HB496 enables CPMs to carry potentially life-saving medications legally. We need access to these medications to effectively and safely attend our patients in the home setting. Some midwives around the state are carrying these medications illegally to serve their patients well and ensure they have access to appropriate care, and they are doing so at their own risk. In addition to anti-hemorrhagic medications, HB496 enables access to RhoGAM, Vitamin K, and eye prophylaxis. These medications SHOULD be available to all consumers, as they are routinely offered in hospital. As a CPM, I understand how important it is to practice in a well-integrated system. Access to hospital care with collaborative providers and staff will enable home birth patients to access emergency and non emergency care in a friendly and timely manor, leading to better outcomes. Families in Ohio deserve to have midwifery care and regardless of this bill's passing, they will still seek out and obtain prenatal, birth, and postpartum care from midwives. This bill will enable access to safe, competent, and well trained providers and that is what every birthing person deserves! The bill ensures these consumers will receive full, informed consent, and that is what the midwifery model of care is based on. It ensures midwives are practicing safely and requires accountability for actions. This is essential! HB496 also provides protection for the midwives in the state and that leads to better care, better access to testing, and better transfers when needed. Families should be able to choose how and where they give birth. Birth is about building families. These families deserve access to good care at a much lower cost than in hospital and midwives provide this care. There have been midwives as long as there have been human beings on this planet. Please allow this beautiful, incredible profession to perpetuate in a way that is safe for midwives and consumers. Midwifery isn't going anywhere procreation will continue. HB496 enables this to happen.

I was a consumer, before and after I became a midwife. As a consumer, I was failed by the medical system so severely it almost cost me my life. I was just another patient to my OB and he neglected to fully inspect my placenta for completion which caused a nearly catastrophic hemorrhage and my life. He was dismissive of my concerns about this and I was sent home after a blood transfusion and a 3 day stay in a hospital- my only follow up being a 6 week postpartum. What no one told me is that excessive blood loss can contribute to postpartum mood disorders. No one was checking on me while I spiraled into depression and anxiety. I was alone and scared with no professionals to guide me or provide counseling. I was trying to care for a toddler and a newborn, anemic, anxious, and without support from my husband who had to return to work 3 days postpartum. Midwifery care was so different. I had multiple postpartum visits. I had postnatal evaluations for mental health at every visit. I finally had appropriate care, including referrals to my OB and PCP for antidepressants. My baby thrived and my family did as well. Midwifery care saves lives through relationship-building, incredible skill sets, informed consent, and appropriate referrals, and every birthing person deserves that. That is why I became a midwife.

I support HB496 because families matter and every birthing person in Ohio deserves good care!

Brie Hammer, CPM, LCPM (KY)