

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 Catherine "Casey" Gries and I am a mother of two. Both of my children were born naturally under the care of a midwife. My first at Good Samaritan hospital with the Tri Health Nurse Midwives, and my second at home with Brie Hammer and Pamela Bell of Women's Wisdom.

I urge you to license Midwives in the state of Ohio. I believe that the support, personal relationships and medical and emotional care that women are receiving from midwives is unparalleled. I began my first pregnancy under the care of OBGYNs and I was mortified by the complete lack of respect that I was treated with. I wasn't looked at as an active participant in my pregnancy and birth, but simply as a patient with a medical condition to be "treated". Switching to midwifery care was one of the best choices I've made for myself in my adult life. Now, more than ever, we need to be standing with women and supporting them through the incredibly magical but trying period of pregnancy and birth. By allowing them to choose how, where, and with whom they are bringing their babies into the world, we are creating a safer and more nurturing environment for the next generation of mothers and children. By licensing the midwives that make this possible, we are also making it exponentially safer.

I support HB 496 because I support mothers and children. I want more of them to have the experience that my family was fortunate enough to have under the care of local midwives. I implore you to make this a safer and more accessible choice for everyone by licensing the incredibly talented and able midwives of Ohio.