

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'm Marlena McCarty and have two beautiful boys. My oldest was born in a hospital setting with an OB and my youngest was born at home with the assistance of a midwife. As a veterinarian I understand the need for a varied approach to medical care that this bill will provide for more families.

There are several reasons that I decided to go with midwifery care for my second pregnancy with a major portion of that being cost of care significantly less than traditional hospital births and I felt extremely comfortable that my midwife would talk me through things of she felt a hospital birth would be best and this bill would help facilitate that with more uniform training and greater access to a better array of diagnostics and medical interventions as needed. The second most important thing to make that switch for me was that during my first labor I had to advocate hard for what I wanted that birth to look like down to the pain meds I took. I repeatedly refused opioids because they are ineffective for me and they kept on me to take them so I did and had to be in pain until I could take my next NSAIDs and then I asked them not to send opioids home and they still did. I never felt that I wasn't listened to with my midwife and this bill would also allow for more midwives to work side by side with hospitals to ensure that these women have an advocate so they can focus on their labor. The biggest hurdle for me with getting midwife care was that I was seeking dual care with an OB and with the current laws in place had to lie to my OB about my plans for birth. Not only did this place me in an ethical dilemma with my OB but also reduced my continuity of care. This bill could make a significant improvement in prenatal and postnatal care and provide flexibility and choices within that medical field.

In conclusion, I support HB 496 because it will improve care for pregnant women in Ohio.

Marlena McCarty