

Hello, my name is Nicole Young. I am a certified professional midwife of nearly 30 years. I am also a licensed midwife in South Carolina and New Mexico. I have delivered or helped deliver over 3,000 babies. I speak today in opposition to the fundamental purpose of this House Bill 496, namely, that the practice of midwifery in this state should be regulated by a nursing board. I believe this bill falls short of protecting birthing moms of all walks of life. If there is a need for a state oversight structure, it should not fall under the nursing board or any other state medical board, but should instead have its own governing body, a midwifery board. There are 5 issues that illustrate this bill's shortfalls.

First, why should nurses "dictate" the job of a midwife? Except for a very small minority of nurses, the job descriptions of the two are vastly different. What do nurses do? They deal with sickness, disease, injury, and death. Where do they deal with it? In a hospital, with a hospital protocol mentality. They do a great job, and this is great for those who wish to have that type of birth. But while nurses are proficient at the science and protocols of a hospital, midwives have been solely concerned with birth and pregnancy care. One brings life into the world the other mostly treats injuries, disease and death. No matter how subconsciously, that is ingrained in the nursing philosophy and affects their care. Further, in general, nurses treat birth as a medical emergency, midwives treat birth as a celebration of life and family.

Second, and most importantly, it encroaches on medical freedom and marketplace choice. Two fundamental ideals of American liberty. Women want the freedom to deliver their baby according to their own wishes and plans. While this legislation does give common sense freedom to midwives so they can provide the best home birth care available, the bill's regulations can easily be increased, and as most burdensome regulations do, grow more and more restrictive. Add to that the part of the law mandating midwives be charged with a felony if they do not exactly comply, and you will get two trends. Women will have less choice of pregnancy care and/or honest, hardworking midwives will be driven underground. It is absurd creating potential felons of a midwife or mother for simply wanting the best for their family.

Third, the free market is already making its decision and will lead to better regulation than anything a group of politicians can do. Maternity wards across Ohio are shutting their doors. Some birthing mothers would have to travel hours to get to a maternity ward. Home birthing moms do not want to be in a hospital. Why then would they want their healthcare provider to be regulated by the same people who have ruined the hospital paradigm. Why should they be trusted with the care of minorities when their numbers are already so dismal a large portion are looking outside the hospital experience to deliver their baby. And for that matter, why should the Amish be given freer choice than any other Americans by exceptions written for them only.

Fourth, there is a projected shortage of 125, 000 doctors over the next 10 years. There is currently a shortage of nurses, and it is expected to stay that way into the future. Why would we add one more responsibility for nurses and doctors when they have so much to do already saving people who really need the medical attention. It is common sense that this is an area where midwives and a midwifery board can alleviate the pressure from bloated appointment calendars that have people waiting months for a medical appointment.

Thank you for your time.

