

March 17th, 2012

Dear Health Care Committee,

Thanks so much for giving me the opportunity to express my feelings about House Bill 2997. I support this bill with few reservations. I am still not sure that mandatory licensing will automatically lead to improved safety overall, but I do value what licensing has to offer, especially from the perspective of setting standards of care and educational requirements. It think it is possible that one outcome of mandatory licensing will be that more mainstream care providers will be willing to cooperate with midwives to improve care for all mothers and babies.

I also urge you to think carefully about the exemption for traditional midwives. Please preserve and protect this exemption. There are small communities in our state for whom traditional midwifery care is one of very few options for birth. I would like to see these communities' traditional midwives accepted and supported (certainly not penalized!) so that they may have opportunities to grow and continue to offer excellent care.

Regardless of my feelings about the bill, I am a home-birth midwife, and I also attended births in the hospital as a doula for years before I made the switch to home birth. Hospitals provide valuable, life-saving tools and I am grateful for their availability. But through real-life experience in both realms, I have come to believe that midwifery care, for the right mother-baby candidates, is in many ways superior to the maternity care offered in-hospital. I hope to see accessibility to midwifery care for all women in Oregon continue to improve.

Sincerely,

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