

Dear Chairman Salinas and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a mother of a two-year old friendly, chatty little girl. She was born healthy, at home with midwives (as were my brothers and I). I am writing to ask that you vote yes on HB 2845 to improve access to midwifery care. After a decade of being a student or taking care of other families as a nanny, I have never had much in the way of resources, living mostly month-to-month. My insurance under OHP did not cover midwifery services, which meant that I struggled financially every day; but the support and empathy I felt at the midwifery appointments was so crucial to me having a healthy, safe pregnancy and birth. As labs were not covered for midwives, I received these at a hospital with whom they have a combo-care plan for people like me on OHP. It was extremely stressful to have to go to two different places for prenatal appointments on opposite sides of town, all by bus, and still have to get to work. If it was covered, mothers would only need to go to one place for all their prenatal appointments.

My primary midwife and her team were always available for my questions or needs, and there is no one else I could imagine being my guide and my baby's guide through that vulnerable, beautiful experience.

Now, having gone back to school, starting to work for myself as a massage therapist while I try to support my daughter, I want to help remove the stigma on young mothers on OHP who should have the choice to decide where their child is born, without sacrificing much needed resources to build a solid foundation, and with the compassion and extensive knowledge imparted by a midwife. Choices in bringing life into the world should be a right, not a privilege, as that is ingrained in valuing life. I hope that if I have another child in the future, years from now, that I will not experience discrimination/barriers in coverage, that midwives will not be discriminated against by the private insurance sector and OHP. They are truly so important for the health and wellbeing of a community, and have been since time immemorial.

Thank you for reading,

Norah Joy Purdy
1120 SE Sherman St. #109
Portland, OR 97214