

Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the House Health Committee,

Thank you for your time in reading this. I am a midwife and mother to a home-birther 3 year old son. I live in Talent and have been practicing since 2016. Please vote yes on HB2388 so that families can access the midwifery care I provide- so that families can access the care of a trained birth attendant.

Midwives provide empowering wrap-around care that supports a family's choices. I became a midwife and cared for many families myself before I fully understood how life-changing the support and care we provide can be for a family, for a mother. I myself was midwifed by my midwifery mentors through my first pregnancy and birth. The late night calls, the home visits, the respect for my informed choice set me on a path to motherhood that empowered my knowing and encouraged my transformation into mother.

Though midwifery care is cost-effective and saves money for our health systems, in my experience many families cannot afford to access midwifery care, particularly in the home setting. I interviewed with a family last year who ended up not having insurance coverage with their insurance plan and even with my reduced fee offer, they ultimately were not able to afford midwifery care and instead opted for an unassisted birth. This family was clear about the care they desired- professional, safe home birth midwifery care with a trained birth attendant- but due to their lack of income and lack of insurance coverage they felt forced to take a risk and birth without a trained professional. I've heard of many others pursuing unassisted births due to financial barriers.

HB2388 would improve access to trained birth attendants for these families- to midwifery care by Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives, CNMs and Naturopathic midwives in all locations.

Please vote YES on HB2388 to allow all Oregon families to access midwifery care. I appreciate your time and the work you do to support the choices and health of mamas and babies.

Sincerely,

Kristy Newell, CPM
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