

Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a mother of one in Portland and had my baby at home with midwives. I am writing to ask you to vote yes on HB 2388 to improve access to midwifery care including expansion of insurance coverage for the safe and cost-effective care to higher-risk groups.

In my research of the topic before birth, I learned that hospital outcome for mother and infant mortality are among the worst in the United States compared to many other developed and undeveloped countries. This is due to time limits set on birth times, unnecessary interventions that inevitably lead to more interventions including cesarean sections, just to name a few. In particular, I birthed my daughter in COVID times and felt an immense concern to leave hospital facilities and staff available to those suffering from these complications. I also felt concern with even being in a facility like this with potential exposure to coronavirus or other infectious diseases for myself or my newborn. It also feels important to note that the act of being in a clinical setting takes away from the beauty and natural feeling of giving birth and being comfortable. This doesn't even begin to encompass the feeling of support I experienced throughout my prenatal time from visits with my midwives and the care they could show me, the kind of care that was absent when compared to friends and relatives utilizing a more traditional setting with OBGYN physicians. In specific regard to the timing of births, my labor lasted 30 hours. I am certain that had I used a traditional hospital setting, I would have been coaxed to use pain management, other interventions, not allowed to eat and placed on IV, and potentially coerced in cesarean section, all factors that greatly increase costs but that do not improve outcomes! Being at home, the midwives could provide the support that they felt I needed or when I asked and all of these additional costs and risk factors for birth outcomes and development were avoided.

Not to mention I feel empowered as a woman and mother and could enjoy the calm and intimate home setting with my husband for the birth of our first child.

I cannot imagine that women do not have access to this option, and that they perhaps don't even know about it. I also feel great sadness that many providers in this field may eventually change fields due to lack of reimbursement. HB 2388 would increase access to midwifery care for Oregon families whether they choose to give birth in hospital, birth center, or home with Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives, Certified Nurse Midwives, or Naturopathic Physicians.

Please vote yes on HB 2388 so that all Oregon families have access to midwifery care. Thank you for the work you do to support the health of mothers and babies.

With gratitude,
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