

Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am one of the only Black Nurse Midwives in Oregon, providing full scope midwifery care at Legacy Emanuel midwifery. I have been practicing midwifery for ten years. I am also a mother of two little girls ages 3 and 5 who were both born at home. My wife and I decided to have our children at home because we felt the individualized care would be best for our diverse family. I am writing to ask you to vote yes on HB 2388 to improve access to midwifery care.

Midwives provide excellent and safe care. Our midwives were able to meet the needs of our family by providing excellent and culturally specific care to us throughout the birthing process and after in the safety of our own home.

Midwifery care provides large cost savings to insurers and health systems but many families still can't access midwifery care because about half of Oregon insurers (both private and OHP) provide limited or no coverage for birth center or home birth midwifery care. There was only one out of hospital midwife in network with our insurance and I know her personally and preferred not to see her as my provider. We saved up money for a whole year and still could barely afford to pay out of pocket a luxury most can not afford. I see many patients who would like to have their babies out of hospital especially at a time when COVID adds a whole new layer of stress and risk when it comes to hospital birth. Most of these patients do not have access to out of hospital birth because their insurance will not cover it.

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.

Sincerely,

-Annie Johnson CNM