

**DEB PATTERSON  
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL  
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10**



**OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON**

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10, which includes South Salem, West Salem, Monmouth, and Independence. I would like to add my support to HB 3592, which would require general hospitals licensed in Oregon to provide maternity services subject to exemption allowed by the Oregon Health Authority. The OHA would need to conduct an equity analysis prior to hospitals opting out of providing maternity services; prior to closure, the analysis must determine that the closure of services would not adversely impact pregnant individuals in the community served by the hospital, as well as pregnant individuals in rural areas or belonging to any class protected from discrimination under Oregon law.

Nationwide, maternal mortality and emergency deliveries were increasing even before the pandemic, which put an additional strain on access to obstetric and maternal healthcare. Data shows clear and persistent disproportionately higher mortality rates related to pregnancy for Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native people. Additionally, a 2019 study found that pregnancies in rural areas were 9% more likely to result in mortality or morbidity. There is a clear need for action ensuring that hospitals, in opting out of providing maternal services, are not putting vulnerable populations at risk.

The recently proposed closure of the Legacy Mt. Hood birthing center highlights the adverse impact experienced by patients at risk for maternal morbidity and mortality, as well as the risk for patients who cannot easily travel to the next closest facility—which in this case is 17 miles away. Race, income, disability status, and place of residence should never dictate the outcome of a pregnancy. HB 3592 aid that goal by requiring the Oregon Health Authority to consider the welfare of vulnerable populations before allowing hospitals to opt out of offering maternity services. I urge your aye vote.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deb Patterson