

Submitter: Edwina Koch  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB692

Dear Senate Early Childhood and Behavioral Health Committee,

My name is Edwina Koch, and I am a social work intern, a birth worker, and an advocate for perinatal justice. Through my work with the Oregon Prison Birth Project, I have supported pregnant people in custody, many of whom are BIPOC and navigating pregnancy under deeply challenging circumstances. I have witnessed firsthand how access to culturally specific perinatal care—including doulas, lactation support, and trauma-informed birth work—can transform birth outcomes and provide dignity in situations where it is often lacking.

Too often, BIPOC parents and those impacted by systemic inequities are denied the resources they need to thrive. I have seen how perinatal support, especially in cases involving substance use disorder, incarceration, and medical mistreatment, can be the difference between fear and empowerment, between trauma and healing. Every person giving birth in Oregon deserves access to a system that affirms their humanity and provides them with the support they need, regardless of race, income, or legal status.

That is why I urge you to support this SB 692, which will expand the perinatal workforce and create a task force for transformational change in birth equity. These initiatives will not only save lives but will also move Oregon toward a future where every birthing person receives the care they deserve.

Thank you for your time and commitment to improving birth outcomes in our state.

Sincerely,  
Edwina Koch