



Submitter: Sarah Wort

Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB 692 and SB 693

Chair Reynolds, members of the committee, my name is Sarah Wort. I am from Keizer, Oregon. I am here in support of SB 692 and SB 693.

I am a THW Doula, a Local Support Coordinator for Postpartum Support International, and the owner/manager of Salem Doulas, a community doula group & billing hub in Marion & Polk Counties. My journey into this work began when I noticed a troubling trend while facilitating a local new moms' support group. I saw so many moms feeling dissatisfied with their birth experiences and struggling in the postpartum period. I can relate deeply - I had a tough postpartum experience myself, and I could see how it was affecting other families.

I realized that postpartum care isn't just about recovery; it's about helping parents build confidence. It's about making sure they feel supported, that they have someone to talk to, that they know they're not alone in the tough moments. It's about resources and helping families avoid isolation. This is why I focus on perinatal mental health - because it has such a long-term impact on both parents and children.

The truth is, families are often under-resourced during this critical time. The emotional and mental toll can last well beyond the birth, affecting not just the parents, but the whole family dynamic. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the perinatal period. And it doesn't have to be this way. We have the tools, the knowledge, and the experience to help make the transition smoother, to help normalize the struggles of parenthood, and to give families the support they so desperately need.

As an example, within my doula group, we recently supported a mom who experienced postpartum psychosis with her first baby. She contacted us whilst pregnant with her second baby, and together with her providers we ensured that she had continuous doula and mental health support throughout her perinatal period. We also helped her navigate a challenging relationship with her husband, accompanied her to the Center for Hope and Safety to assess her options, and supported her as she made decisions to ensure her safety and well-being. For her, and for many others, we've been a lifeline.

The biggest challenge I face with Salem Doulas is managing the administration. Currently this is a volunteer-run service, as we don't have funding for the necessary administrative costs. The alternative being the doulas cover this cost themselves, which I feel is a burden they shouldn't have to bear considering all the hours and dedication they give to their work and clients. But even with those challenges, it's so rewarding to see the difference we make for families.

At the end of the day, it's about breaking the silence around postpartum struggles and making sure every family has access to the support they need, when they need it most. I trust that you will join us in supporting this legislation.

I urge you to vote YES on [SB 692](#) and [SB 693](#).