

Dear Representative.

My name is Karinda Woodward and I am opposed to HB2997 because I am unable to support any bill that violates women's reproductive choices.

It seems like there is a great deal of concern surrounding public safety. While I agree that it is vital for mothers and children to feel safe and supported in their communities, I feel that this will elicit the opposite response. In passing this bill you are telling me that:

1. I am not intelligent enough to make my own decisions regarding childbirth.
2. Women should not be allowed full control over their own body or their reproductive rights.
3. That you would prefer that I had a baby alone in my home because I will be unable to hire the type of provider I feel comfortable with. I am unwilling to undergo the risks of a cesarean because it is more important that I am healthy and alive to care for the children that I already have.
4. My daughters, one who is a survivor of sexual abuse, should not have all options of her, therefore putting her in a position in which she feels like she is being coerced during one of the most vulnerable times of her life.
5. That the women who I have served as an IBCLC and a childbirth educator don't count. That certain women, like those who have a non-traditional cesarean scare for example, are unworthy to make their own birthing decisions. Women with the highest risk factors that are most likely to hire an unlicensed midwife because they feel strongly about avoiding hospital policies and cesareans, will be the most likely to give birth at home unattended.

An additional concern that I have is that members of the board may feel that the Oregon Midwifery Council (OMC) is representative of birthing women in Oregon. This is not the case. Most women of childbearing age do not even know that the OMC exists. Barriers to participation in the OMC include location, lack of quality childcare, work or education schedules. The OMC represents a very small group of women who typically share opinions with one another have the ability to attend regular meetings.

The dynamics change. There is a difference between refusing standard care or recommendations versus being presented with information and making your own decision. An unlicensed midwife is able to present information in an unbiased way that many providers are unable to because they are controlled by hospital or state policies. I am uncomfortable with decisions regarding my body being coerced or controlled in any way.