

Dear Chair Salinas and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a new mother with an 8 week old baby that was born safely at home in the care of a team of trained midwives. I am writing to ask you to vote yes on HB 2845 to improve access to midwifery care.

The cost of my child's birth came out of my pocket, approximately \$5,000. I am on the Oregon Health Plan, but was not able to get all of the required documents in by the very early deadline of around 30 weeks before birth, and therefore OHP would not cover the cost of my baby's birth. By 30 weeks I had not made a decision where or how I wanted to birth her, and therefore was denied coverage. OHP told me they do not offer any kind of reimbursement for care after the fact, therefore I have no way of requesting reimbursement for the cost of my delivery completed by licensed professionals.

The cost was an extreme burden and I had to borrow money to cover the cost of the birth.

Homebirth should be covered by all insurance and by OHP, without having to pre-register the home birth and choose a midwife so early.

Homebirth is safe under the care of licensed professionals. Birthing at home allowed me to be comfortable and feel safe. This made my labor very short for a first time mom, 12 hours. There is science behind short labors occurring when the mom feels safe and comfortable, and a short labor is often safer than long or stalled labors.

Because I birthed at home, me and my child were not exposed to potentially dangerous hospital pathogens like MRSA and others. At home, we received the same mandatory care provided for newborn in hospitals like vitamin K prophylaxis, anti bacterial eye drops, etc.

I support this bill because it allows women the option to have safe, comfortable births at home without having to finance it like I had to.

Homebirth is such an important choice for some women, and this bill would ensure that some women wouldn't try to give birth at home without a midwife because they couldn't afford it.

If you are interested in further reading about birthing at home or in water, I encourage you to look up Michel Odent, a French doctor who helped pioneer ideas surrounding homebirth using a midwife. Here is an interesting article that may help you understand the importance of supporting HB 2845.

<https://midwiferytoday.com/mt-articles/first-hour/>

Thank you for your time and your work!

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