

Dear Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a new mother in Grants Pass who recently gave birth to my first child at a local birth center with midwives. I am writing this letter to ask you to please vote yes on HB 2845 to help mothers afford midwifery care.

My experience with the midwives who cared for me during pregnancy and postpartum was positive in every way. The midwives were knowledgeable and skillful, and I feel that I received the best possible care. For a low-risk pregnancy like I had, giving birth at a birth center is an ideal choice. I did not want to be pressured into getting interventions. I wanted an environment where a natural birth would be facilitated and supported, but where I would also be receiving care from medical professionals. The birth center provided me with both.

My midwives paved the way for a beautiful, natural birth and took care of every medical need that arose quickly and expertly. I felt that my and my baby's comfort and safety was paramount. I wish that every pregnant woman could experience the same level of care that I did at the birthing facilities of their choosing.

Unfortunately, neither myself nor anyone that I know of has insurance that covers midwifery care or birth centers. Hospital births are covered, despite the fact that the total cost is much higher: when I called my local hospital while pregnant, the approximate cost for a natural vaginal birth was \$10,900 and the Cesarean cost was twice as high. The birth center cost, on the other hand, was \$5,600, and included 11 prenatal and 6 postpartum appointments. None of these appointments are included in the hospital's estimate.

Despite the incredible quality of care and strong relational focus at the birth center, we are unsure if we will be able to afford midwifery care for our next child. Since we are now a single income household, coming up with \$5600 out of pocket will be even more challenging than with our first.

That is why I'm writing to you today. I was excited to learn about this bill because I think midwifery care should be made available to all women in Oregon regardless of financial status or which insurance provider they have. Please help improve access to midwifery care by supporting HB 2845, and thank you for everything you do.

Ariel Kostrna  
1888 NE Beacon Dr  
Grants Pass, OR 97526