

Dear Chair Salinas and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a midwife and small business owner in Portland and have been in practice for 5 years. My name is Catherine Akerson Bailey and I am a Certified Professional Midwife and Licensed Midwife in the state of Oregon. I am writing to ask you to please vote YES on HB 2845 so that the mothers I work with can have insurance coverage for the safe and cost-effective care I provide.

As midwives we are experts in normal, natural birth, and we provide excellent care that our patients truly appreciate. There will always be mothers who want to choose to have their babies at home or in a birth center, and there are many who end up not being able to decide financially to choose the place of birth that they want, due to the lack of insurance coverage.

Although midwifery care provides large cost savings to insurers and health systems, many families still can't access midwifery care because about half of Oregon insurers (both private and OHP) provide limited or no coverage for birth center or home birth midwifery care. I have several clients who have interviewed to have a home birth with me as their midwife who ended up choosing a hospital birth against their desires, because they could not afford to pay for something while also paying for their health insurance that covered a hospital birth only.

HB 2845 would increase access to midwifery care for Oregon families whether they choose to give birth in hospital, birth center, or home with Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives, Certified Nurse Midwives, or Naturopathic Physicians.

Thank you so much for all of the work you do to support mothers and babies in Oregon. I really appreciate it! Please vote yes on HB 2845 so that all Oregon families have access to midwifery care.

Sincerely,

Catherine Akerson Bailey, CPM, LDM
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