

Dear Chair Salinas and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a mom of 4 home born children and the owner of Full Moon Midwifery outside of Canby, OR. I've been practicing as a midwife for 20 years. I'm writing to ask you to vote yes on HB 2845 to improve access to Midwifery care. I was a single mom with my first child and, while I was insured, my carrier did not pay for homebirth. I paid out of pocket which increased my financial stress as I began my journey alone into parenthood. I went on to choose to pay out of pocket for my next 3 births even though my husband and I had health insurance that we paid for out of pocket as self-employed people. We chose to pay out of pocket because we believe so strongly in the excellent care of midwives. I was low risk and felt that my needs would be met more fully by a care practitioner who knew me, my family, my wishes and believed that birth can happen naturally and safely at home. Our midwife was able to not only provide skilled and knowledgeable prenatal care but also to visit me in the post-partum 3 times in the first week in my home which assisted in successful breastfeeding and healing. I couldn't be more satisfied with my midwifery care and birth because of the Midwives that attended me. I would have had less financial stress if these births would have been covered by my insurance company. I believe healthcare is a right and payment for maternity care is an absolute necessity. Midwives are licensed by the state of Oregon and are legitimate healthcare practitioners for pregnant people and newborns and should be paid as such by our insurance industry. The cost of a home maternity care is at most half the cost of a non-interventive hospital birth. The savings to insurance companies is huge. The families of Oregon deserve the choice of healthcare practitioner and the right to have that paid for by their insurance company.

Thank you so much for reading my request and considering to offer your support for HB 2845 so that all Oregon families have access to midwifery care. I appreciate the time and effort you have put in to support the health and well-being of the pregnant and birthing women of Oregon.

Celeste Kersey, CPM, LDM
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