

Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am a Portland resident and parent of four children, three of whom were born at home. I am also a certified professional midwife providing home birth care. I am writing to ask you to vote yes on HB 2388 to improve access to midwifery care and so that the parents I work with can have insurance coverage for the safe and cost-effective care I provide.

Midwives provide excellent care that has been shown to reduce health disparities through attentive individualized care. This is especially relevant at a time when we, as a country, are reckoning with the structural racism that has led to the United States' current dismal statistics around perinatal care for people of color. While ideally people could access culturally-matched care, the care of community midwives, whether culturally-matched or not, helps to close the gap between outcomes for white people and for people of color. Unfortunately, not everyone can afford to access this care. Either they are forced to pay out of pocket when insurance does not cover, or if they cannot do so they are effectively pushed into hospital care that is not their preference. Many clients who are committed to home and birth center birth choose to take on the financial burden, taking away from the resources that they could have spent on their growing family. HB 2388 would expand access to community midwifery care, reduce health disparities, and reduce this financial burden.

Community birth also saves money for insurance companies! The cost of a birth at home or in a birth center is significantly less than it is in a hospital, despite the fact that community midwives provide significantly more prenatal and postpartum care. Midwives' prenatal and postpartum care additionally saves money for insurance companies and consumers by encouraging significantly higher rates of breastfeeding, widely acknowledged to improve infant and child health.

Please vote yes on HB 2388 so that all Oregon families have access to midwifery care. Thank you for the work you do to support the health of mothers and babies.

Sincerely,

Sarah Dinger, CPM
6151 NE Failing St.
Portland, OR 97213