



February 23, 2026

Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Health Care,

Thank you for this opportunity to share our strong support of SB 1568 which would provide technical fixes for SB 692 from 2025 to increase access to doula and lactation support for Oregon families and complete the process of establishing the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative at OHSU in statute. This bill has no fiscal impact. We ask for your support for these needed fixes to follow through on your intent in 2025 to support moms, parents, and babies in Oregon.

My name is Silke Akerson, and I am a midwife and the executive director of the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative, which is Oregon's Perinatal Quality Collaborative or PQC. Each state has a PQC that works to improve care and outcomes around birth for moms and babies in that state. We work closely with hospitals, nurses, providers, doulas, the Oregon Health Authority, the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee, and other partners to create and coordinate perinatal quality improvement for all 39,000 births per year across the state. We have been doing this statewide work since 2012 to help Oregon be a safe and welcoming place to give birth, be born, and thrive within healthy communities.

We see the major positive impact that doula and lactation counselors and educators have for families in Oregon and support the technical fixes in SB 1568 that are needed for effective implementation of SB 692. SB 1568 would clarify implementation details and provide adequate time for thoughtful rulemaking with appropriate stakeholder input.

This bill would also complete the process of establishing the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative in statute, a final step that is needed for full functionality of the organization. OPC is strongly supported by health systems, hospitals, professional organizations, and community organizations working on maternal and infant health. Our establishment in statute will help us serve all of these partners and the families of Oregon more effectively.

I urge this committee to vote yes on Senate Bill 1568 with a do-pass recommendation to support maternal and infant health.

Thank you for all you do for families in our state,

Silke Akerson, MPH, CPM, LDM
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