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Chair Griffith:

My name is Karen Webster. I'm a licensed Direct Entry Midwife (LDEM) in both Maryland & Delaware. I have been attending home births since 1979 and have been in practice since 1985. I have been both a clinical and faculty preceptor for 3 accredited midwifery colleges for over 25 years. *I turn prospective clients away weekly because I'm not allowed by our regulations to attend their VBAC births.*

**Direct Entry Midwives are trained in their didactic and clinical education to attend VBAC and this is the standard of care in most of the 37 states where Direct Entry Midwives are licensed.**

Since Maryland passed it's Direct Entry license statute in 2015, only CNMs (Certified Nurse Midwives) have been allowed to attend home VBACs (vaginal birth after cesarean). I live in Cecil county and practice in Cecil, Harford and several Eastern Shore counties, where there are no CNMs practicing in the home birth setting, either in the past 38 years or currently. That leaves a vast number of Maryland women who desire a home VBAC unserved and with very few options for a vaginal birth in a Maryland hospital where VBAC success rates are very low (10-15%) as compared to success rates with a homebirth LDEM. ( 85%)

I have kept my own practice statistics in NARM's National Data Base and my VBAC success rate over the past 30+ years has been around 83%.

I urge you to listen to the women and families of Maryland and please vote in support of this Bill to increase our scope of practice so we can meet our goals to:

- Lower Maryland's high cesarean section rate – 33.7%
- Increase access to Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC) in all birth settings

Many thanks for your service,

Karen S Webster, CPM, LM (DE & MD)