

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB376 – Health Occupations – Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives – Previous Cesarean-Section

Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Meg Ruzicka. I am a mama and a birth and postpartum doula here Maryland. Above all else, I am a person. I like having choices and making them myself. I like feeling empowered by these choices because I am informed on the benefits and risks of them. And that's exactly what I felt during my second labor.

As a double cesarean mama, I went for the Home Birth After A Cesarean (HBAC). I was surrounded by people who believed in me. People who helped me feel heard and seen and loved, no matter what choices I made. My first birth was full of trauma and one that I look back on a lot, I didn't feel empowered or like I had many choices.

I really think that's all women want.. the choice. The choice to be strong, to be seen for the trials they are going through. The choice to feel like what they are doing is okay. To choose a provider who helps them feel safe and advocated for. And that, to me, meant a home birth midwife for my labor. I had a CNM attend my second labor in my home and, again, it was the love and support that helped me feel stable.

As a doula, I witness so much mental instability surrounding the birth and postpartum experience. I really think it needs to change— the system, and the ability to just simply labor with someone who makes you feel safe.

I'm grateful for western medicine and how cesareans do save lives. I understand the risks. I am also so grateful for our home birth midwives, who are trained medical professionals and the connection they provide their clients. I believe that women are safe in the hands of our midwives, who are passionate about what they do. I believe that women should get the power to decide who they want attending their births, and where they birth their babies.

Thank you.

Megan Ruzicka
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