

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 22, 2023

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT: House Bill 351 – Health Occupations – Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives – Previous Cesarean Section

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express the importance of passing House Bill 351 to allow VBAC for Maryland mothers and laboring people.

Having a vaginal birth after having a C-section can be a safe choice, avoiding another scar and trauma on your uterus, decreasing the chance of infection and need for pelvic floor PT, and most importantly allowing a woman to reconnect with her body and baby during vaginal labor after she may have been robbed if the experience previously.

We know the more scars you have on your uterus, the greater the chance of problems with a later pregnancy, risking adhesions, difficult carrying and even in some cases conceiving. C-sections are painful and best practice of care is inconsistent and lacking at best—I would know, I had a c-section in 2021 with my first child after finding out he was frank breech and our care provided refused to deliver vaginally. My recovery was slow and painful, picking up and nursing my newborn child brought me to tears, and not from the overwhelming feeling of love but from the intense pain I felt in my lower abdomen and the knowing that our experience had been stolen. He showed no emergent or medical need for cesarean but still we were cut, changing out experience and possibilities forever. We want to connect with our babies and reconnect with our bodies to help heal some of the trauma most of us have experienced during our birthing journeys. This experience, choice, and journey are deeply personal, often being made with our families, spouses, medical professionals, and God. This is not something that should be decided in the courts without us, without our say! I beg you to take this letter into consideration, as you make this choice on our behalf. Without VBAC Think of the cuts that will be made, the scars that will be created, the trauma that will be inflicted, the missed opportunities and experiences, the depression from lack of connection, a catastrophic change in views and the overwhelming fear when there should be joy. Allow VBAC for those of us that want it, let us heal.

With grace and gratitude,

Jalisa Anderson