

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Re: House Bill 838 Health Occupations – Licensed Direct–Entry Midwives – Revisions

and Senate Bill 854 Health Occupations – Licensed Direct–Entry Midwives – Revisions

Position: Favorable

My name is Dr. Pamela Woodward Terranova and I am writing to you to ask you to support and vote favorably on HB 838 and SB 854.

These bills help clean up the practice act for Licensed Direct Entry Midwives in the state of Maryland. LDEMs have been established, professional, and safe providers now for ten years and deserve to have more practice autonomy and less restriction, like other independent healthcare practitioners.

In my experience, LDEMs are a safe and professional option for the majority of people seeking their care. As a first-time mother, it was my LDEM who helped me to manage my long, arduous labor with the many tools she had and - just as importantly - helped me to make the call to transfer to the hospital when it was no longer safest for me to continue to labor at home. Despite the fact that it would affect her outcomes and statistics, she of course put my health and safety first with her recommendations. I felt heard, respected, and included throughout the process to the point that I knew I would absolutely seek out midwifery care for any subsequent pregnancies, regardless of the outcome of my first experience.

The statistics of the LDEMs in the state compared to hospitals in satisfaction and success speak for themselves. A huge study of over 110,000 births in the US came out in the last year that homebirth is no different than hospital birth with regards to safety (Bovbjerg, Marit L. PhD, MS*; Cheyney, Melissa PhD, LDM†; Hoehn-Velasco, Lauren PhD, MA‡; Jolles, Diana CNM§; Brown, Jennifer MPH*; Stapleton, Jennifer MA // ; Everson, Courtney PhD¶; Stapleton, Susan CNM, DNP // ; Vedam, Saraswathi RM, PhD#. Planned Home Births in the United States Have Outcomes Comparable to Planned Birth Center Births for Low-Risk Birthing Individuals. Medical Care 62(12):p 820-829, December 2024. | DOI: 10.1097/MLR.0000000000002074)

If Maryland truly considers itself to be the pinnacle of the right to choose, then surely the choice of who should attend one's birth should be included in those protections.

Very sincerely,

Dr. Pamela Woodward Terranova, DC, CACCP

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