

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for allowing me to testify this afternoon. I would like to express my support for this bill. In recent years, more and more mothers have chosen to give birth in an out of hospital setting under the care of midwives. Almost 2% of all women choose this option, the highest level since 1990. There are many reasons for the increase in popularity of homebirth and midwifery, but perhaps the most important is the autonomy and tailored care it affords expectant mothers. I myself gave birth in the care of a midwife in 2023, and I can personally attest that I received a highly tailored, individualized level of care that is very difficult to replicate in a more standard, commercial hospital setting. The women who choose to give birth with a midwife deserve to have access to all of the services that a licensed midwife is able to provide – these should not be arbitrarily restricted because the midwife does not happen to work in a hospital, and birthing mothers should have the greatest degree of autonomy possible in determining if and when to transfer to a hospital.

These principles are consistent with the recent reproductive rights amendment to Maryland’s constitution, which passed referendum easily in last Fall’s election. The amendment codifies every Marylander’s right to reproductive freedom. Surely, this should include a woman’s right to choose not only her birth provider, but the services she wishes to receive from this provider. Restricting the circumstances under which midwives can provide prenatal, post-natal, and labor and delivery care would violate at least the spirit, if not the letter of the reproductive rights amendment. I urge you to continue to support women’s reproductive freedoms and vote in favor of this bill. Thank you.

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