

Re: House Bill 838 Health Occupations – Licensed Direct–Entry Midwives – Revisions
and Senate Bill 854 Health Occupations – Licensed Direct–Entry Midwives – Revisions

Position: Favorable

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to advocate for the availability of home births as a legitimate and accessible option for families. The choice to give birth at home can provide a variety of benefits that support both the mother and the child, fostering a more personalized and empowering birth experience.

First, a home birth allows women to be in a comfortable and familiar environment, which can significantly reduce stress and anxiety during labor. Research shows that the ability to choose one's birth setting can positively impact outcomes, as comfort and emotional well-being play a key role in the progression of labor. For many women, the medicalized environment of a hospital can feel intimidating and intrusive, leading to feelings of vulnerability that may not contribute to a smooth labor experience.

Furthermore, home births often offer greater freedom and autonomy during the labor process. Women can have the flexibility to choose their birth positions, movements, and the support they need, as well as the ability to have their chosen caregivers present. This level of control and comfort can result in a more positive and meaningful birth experience, leading to improved mental and emotional health for both the mother and the baby.

Additionally, home births, when attended by qualified professionals, have been shown to have comparable safety outcomes to hospital births for low-risk pregnancies. Certified midwives, who are extensively trained in prenatal care, labor, and postpartum support, provide personalized and hands-on care during home births. They offer expertise and a holistic approach that prioritizes the well-being of both mother and child. In fact, many studies demonstrate that home births for low-risk pregnancies have lower intervention rates, such as cesarean sections and the use of pain medications, which often come with potential side effects for both the mother and the baby.

Moreover, the growing emphasis on patient-centered care and informed choice in healthcare supports the notion that women should have the option to decide where and how they want to give birth. Forcing women into one standardized model of care limits their ability to make choices about their bodies and families. Allowing home births ensures that women have the opportunity to make informed decisions based on their unique needs, values, and preferences.

In conclusion, the availability of home births provides families with the freedom to choose a safe, personalized, and empowering birth experience. It is essential that we continue to broaden access to this option and support policies that respect a woman's right to choose how and where she gives birth. By making home births more accessible, we are affirming the importance of choice, autonomy, and well-being in the childbirth process.

Thank you for considering this important issue. I hope you will support policies that allow home births to remain a safe and available option for families.

Sincerely,

Hillary Kessler

7921 Stevenson Rd, Pikesville, MD 21208