



Fruit of the Womb, LLC
Homebirth and Healing
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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Caitlin Manela. I am a mother to four children born at home with a Certified Professional Midwife. I am also a Certified Professional Midwife and Licensed Direct Entry Midwife myself. Previously, I served as a birth doula for many years, both in and outside of hospitals.

I am a resident of Reisterstown, in Baltimore County, Maryland.

I am writing in urgent support of the Birth Equity Bill (HB1251) and CPM licensure renewal bill (HB838/SB854).

These bills support all Maryland residents to exercise their right to informed choice regarding the care they seek for pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period.

We want a population of parents and babies who are safe and healthy physically and mentally. CPMs provide safe, evidence-based care for families choosing out of hospital birth. Without the option of choosing a CPM, LDEM, many families would rather forgo prenatal care and give birth unassisted. With a CPM, LDEM, families experience profound satisfaction and empowerment at a level that is often not available through hospital-based practices.

We want to maintain and expand access to our care and also to facilitate smoother transitions from home to hospital in the case of elective or emergency transfer.

For families choosing to give birth in the hospital, the ability to access information regarding each hospital's practices and outcomes will empower them to make the best choices for themselves and their babies. It will also encourage hospitals to adopt safer, evidence-based practices, including supporting doulas. As an additional benefit, these changes will ultimately save money due to fewer unnecessary interventions, including cesarean sections and other invasive procedures.

I believe opposition to these bills is rooted entirely in economic interest, as the safety of home birth with a certified professional midwife has been proven again and again, as have the benefits of doula care and truly informed choice.

I urge you to support these bills and thank you in advance for your support.

Caitlin Manela, CPM, LDEM