

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk Chair,
House Health and Government Operations Committee House Office Building,
Taylor House Office Building, Room 21401
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

February 21, 2025

Testimony in support
House Bill 838 - Health and Government Operations Committee -
Licensed Direct Entry Midwives - Revisions

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Watts and I am writing to you to ask you to support and vote favorably on House Bill 838.

These bills will modernize 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.

Becoming a parent is one of the most transformative experiences of a person's life; there are infinite rewards, and often, just as many challenges. LDEMs provide unique care that every parent deserves, but only a few get to experience. My experience becoming a mother was met with many challenges in the hospital system; sadly, I did not have the compassionate, age-old, individualized care of an LDEM to guide me. The extraordinary work they do can not be adequately described in a short letter, but what I can say with certainty, with fewer words - our Maryland families need them.

All the best,

Jessica Watts

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