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The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 21, 2025

Testimony in Support
House Bill 838 – Health Occupations – Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives – Revisions and Senate Bill 854

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

My name is Callai Reed Carroll and I am writing to you to ask you to support and vote favorably on HB 838 and SB 854.

These bills will modernize the practice act for Licensed Direct Entry Midwives (LDEMs) 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.

As an undergraduate at The University of Iowa a decade ago, I took a course that introduced me to home birth. I knew then that midwifery care was the choice I would make when it was the right time to start a family. I now have two thriving toddlers whose prenatal care, labors, and births (though radically different) were managed by the same incredible LDEM. My first child was a simple, beautiful home birth. My second daughter was an emergency transfer to the hospital upon the recommendation of our LDEM due to an extremely rare positioning that occurred spontaneously during labor. This experience alone demonstrates the competency LDEMs have; she advised we transfer when it was no longer safe for my baby and I to continue laboring at home. Ironically, our experience in the hospital after the transfer was absolutely terrible for a multitude of reasons including the impersonal, cold and overworked nature of the staff.

In my birthing experience, LDEMs are a competent, safe, and professional option for the majority of families seeking their care. I also believe my postpartum experience and maternal mental health benefitted immensely from my care with an LDEM.

As we continue to grow our own family, I will continue to seek midwifery care for my pregnancies and access to LDEMs is incredibly important to me for this reason. If Maryland is the pinnacle of

choice, then passing HB/838 and SB/854 will be proof our state cares about women's right to choose the provider of their choice when it comes to birth and growing a family. We own multiple businesses in Baltimore County and truly have considered moving these businesses out of state if we are not able to choose an LDEM or provider of our choice as it relates to growing our family; this is a very important issue to us.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,
Callai Reed Carroll