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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 24, 2025

To: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for **HB838: Health Occupations – Licensed Direct-Entry Midwives – Revisions**. This vital legislation strengthens maternal health care in Maryland by expanding the scope of practice for licensed direct-entry midwives, ensuring that midwifery care remains accessible, independent, and responsive to the needs of women and families across the state.

Access to comprehensive and diverse maternal health care options is critical for the well-being of expectant mothers and their babies. Direct-entry midwives provide an essential service, particularly for women seeking personalized, community-based birthing experiences outside of hospital settings. However, outdated regulations and unnecessary oversight requirements limit the ability of these highly trained professionals to provide safe and effective care. **HB838** removes these restrictions, recognizing the autonomy and expertise of licensed direct-entry midwives while maintaining appropriate safeguards to protect patient safety.

For many women—especially those in rural or underserved communities—midwifery care offers a culturally competent and cost-effective alternative to traditional obstetric services. By eliminating unnecessary barriers, **HB838** ensures that more women can access the birthing support that aligns with their needs, preferences, and values. Additionally, by refining disciplinary procedures and reporting requirements, this legislation enhances the professional standards of midwifery while reducing administrative burdens that do not directly contribute to patient care.

Maryland must continue to support policies that promote maternal health equity and provide expectant mothers with the full range of safe, evidence-based birthing options. **HB838** is a necessary step toward achieving this goal, ensuring that licensed direct-entry midwives can practice independently and meet the growing demand for midwifery care in Maryland.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus strongly urges the **Health and Government Operations Committee** to issue a **favorable report** for **HB838**. Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your continued dedication to improving the lives of Marylanders.