

**Hearing 3/13 at 1:00 p.m.**

**House Health Committee**

**Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations – Perinatal Mental Health  
Conditions (HB1118)**

**Position: Favorable**

Good Afternoon, Chair Bagnall and members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Lisa Kolbe, and I write this letter in strong support of HB1118, Health, Health Insurance, and Health Occupations – Perinatal Mental Health Conditions. This bill would expand perinatal mental health screenings and require patient and provider training related to perinatal mental health. In short, this bill will save lives.

My daughter, Andrea Kolbe, died by suicide at 35 years of age due to postpartum depression and psychosis and as a result of grossly inadequate maternal mental health care. Andrea, raised in Gaithersburg, MD, a graduate of Hofstra University, dance teacher, choreographer, and owner of a dance studio on Long Island, had a successful and joyful pregnancy. She delivered her healthy son, Harbor McBride, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

After 8 weeks, Andrea began showing signs of mental struggle and fracture. It was at this stage that the difficulty in finding referrals to competent professionals and providers in perinatal mental health reached a critical juncture. The system failed her, her family, and the ultimate sacrifice and failure was to her son. Passage of this essential bill for all women will provide adequate mental health screenings, continuing education for mental health providers, and make resources immediately available and accessible to all mothers upon discharge, at office visits both before delivery and post-delivery, and at WIC offices.

Postpartum depression is a dangerous and life threatening diagnosis and must be treated with urgency and critical action. My daughter should not have died. It is a tragedy of unspeakable proportions. I urge for the passage of this important and life saving bill. No family should ever have to endure the pain and agony that our family has been inflicted with due to the lack of maternal mental health care, education and resources.

On behalf of my Andrea, I thank you for your consideration and action in the passage of this life saving bill.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kolbe  
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