

Dear Senator Moore

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I write to express my concern about the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

Women have the right to chose where, how and with whom they wish to give birth. Forcing all women to give birth at the hospital is unjust, unsafe and inhumane. It has already been proven again and again that there are much less incidences of intervention and caesarean in homebirth. And not to mention the extra cost and strain this will put on the hospitals and medical economy. It is basic right of women to choose where they give birth, and if you succeed in making homebirth with a midwife illegal, we are certainly regressing to a time of great unjust to women. A great, awful injustice to women.

It is perhaps difficult to comprehend the power of a woman birthing at home if you have not had much to do with it. But I can assure you, that, when a woman is free to give birth in her own home, with her partner holding her close, her children close by to witness a miracle, a competent midwife there to make sure everything is alright, a truly holy event takes place. Babies are born in peace, women are empowered as mothers and fathers are empowered as loving men. This event has the

potential to change the world. To live with respect for all life and to be strong in our potential. And this is truly something we need to nurture in this day and age.

And this is not to say that everything always goes well. Of course there are unexpected situations that arise. This is a normal part of life and birth. But there is considerably less examples of this happening at homebirth. And this is a proven fact.

So I implore to you, to please hear this call from myself and all the many other people who have written to you and the many others who have not been able to, but still feel the same,

RESPECT THE CHOICE OF WOMEN TO GIVE BIRTH AT HOME, WITH A MIDWIFE IF THEY CHOOSE AND IN YOUR POSITION, ENSURE THAT THIS RIGHT IS FULLFILLED.

Thank-you.

Yours sincerely

Taneal Blake