

Dear Senator Moore,

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

I am shocked and angry at this proposed legislation. I consider it is women's and men's rights to choose where they birth their child and with whom. I am astounded that we are not following more progressive countries like the UK, Netherlands and NZ, whose national health systems actively support homebirth. I would also think it would be good economic sense to reduce the number of healthy women and babies in the hospitals by allowing them to birth at home. In addition, I have no doubt that the enforcing of this legislation will drive parents to have unassisted births at home, which I consider somewhat riskier without the skill of a midwife.

My personal experience of homebirth is this:

After careful evaluation of my birthing options in 2007, I made a complete reversal of mindset and to one that I felt had least risk (ie best for mother and infant's physical and mental well being). This was from a private hospital, obstetrician driven birth, to a homebirth with two highly educated and experienced midwives. I also had shared care with a public obstetrician should we find ourselves requiring hospitalised medical treatment.

Our daughter's birth at home was perfect. I consider my ability to focus on labour at home, in my own time and space, with complete confidence in our Independent midwives to be the key to that particularly safe, nurtured and empowering homebirth and our absolute right. Can I also remind you that we paid for our own midwives care rather than being a cost to the medical system; although some financial support such as from our private health insurance or Medicare would have been much appreciated.

Please support qualified, registered, Independent midwives to birth babies in private homes thereby preserving parents choices, a humanitarian right.

Yours sincerely
Sophie Parker