

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.

It is ridiculous to be taking away a choice that involves completely professional and thorough care of expectant mothers and their unborn babies.

The push for hospitalised care is completely at odds with the current recognition that the hospital system need an overhaul. It also seems contradictory to be pushing for births to happen at the same place as so much disease, ill health and death occurs! This is not a place where I want my baby to come into the world at.

By inadvertently (or purposefully?) making it illegal for midwives to attend home births you are courting dangerous behaviour by mothers (and partners) that could put lives at risk. Please do not preside over a seriously backwards step in the care of mothers and babies.

As we are preparing for a home birth with an exceptionally competent midwife, I have found it particularly instructive that a course that was run by hospital based midwives specifically encouraged water births at home for numerous reasons, but not least of all because they know what can happen in a hospital. Please do not remove this natural choice.

Yours sincerely

Harry Troedel