

Dear Senator Moore

I write to you regarding the inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills.

I am extremely concerned 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. This in itself is a positive step as medicare funding for midwives is long overdue. However, under this arrangement Independent midwives will be excluded. This is completely unacceptable.

In nations such as New Zealand, the U.K and the Neatherlands the rights of women to choose homebirth is supported and midwives funded through their national health schemes. It is the right of all women to choose where, and with whom they give birth.

I did not have a homebirth. However, I did have a wonderful Independent midwife do all my pre and postnatal care and accompany me to the birth centre. She was invaluable. I could not ask for a more dedicated and caring woman. We are still in touch.

It both saddens and angers me to think that in the very near future this may not be possible due to these new laws.

Please, action MUST be taken to ensure that Independent midwives are included within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

Yours sincerely

Amy Scholten-Smith