

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.

As a women having her first baby I can not imagine having the right to choose a homebirth taken away from me by a government legislation. Not all women and their families will choose homebirth but the choice should not be taken away from those who do which to birth at home. I believe women and their families who choose to birth in an environment that is theirs and were they are in control not the medical profession are women who are making a fully informed choice and one that gives the women and her baby the best chance of a healthy outcome. If these bills are past the community will loose midwives that have only the woman and her families interests at heart. Private midwives believe in the woman's ability to birth her baby without intervention, yet they have the skills to realise when a pregnancy or labour deviates from normal and will seek necessary medical assistance. I would not choose to place my body or my baby's life in anyone else's hands other than a private midwife. Please do not take away my rights to birth my baby where and with the midwives of my choice.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Mazurek