

Elizabeth Taylor

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RE: Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009

Sixteen months ago my second son was born peacefully into a birth pool in my home in the presence of my husband and my two midwives. It was such a great experience and the care that I received from my midwives was amazing. This was in stark contrast to my experience with the birth of my first son in a private hospital in 2004.

In the weeks leading up to the birth of my first son I was advised to have a caesarean as my obstetrician told me he believed that my baby was too big for me to birth vaginally. I did some research and fought to have a 'trial of labour' and in the end I had a vaginal birth. After my birth I found out that my doctor was going to a conference overseas the week after my due date and I now believe that he was trying to 'clear the decks' so that he could have a nice break from the office.

As a result of my two birth experiences I was very disappointed to learn that the government will not provide indemnity insurance assistance to midwives working in private practice. Midwives in private practice are the only health professionals in Australia currently without indemnity insurance. This is not due to their practice, or claims history, it is simply due to the fact that they are small in number. Medical practitioners and their clients currently enjoy indemnity protection at an estimated cost of \$500 Million to the taxpayer.

If national registration proceeds as planned women choosing homebirth will be unable to access a registered midwife, and essentially the practice will go 'underground'. It is not acceptable that women are unable to choose the care of a registered midwife to give birth at home. Homebirth is a nationally funded option in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and The Netherlands. I ask that you support a woman's right to choose where and with whom she gives birth.

Please do not allow the choice of a homebirth with an independent midwife be taken away from the women of Australia. Homebirth is safe, low cost and a great way of freeing up our hospitals and surgical theatres for the sick people that really need them.

Yours Sincerely

Elizabeth Taylor