

I would like to voice my strong opposition to the proposal to make homebirth illegal. As a consumer of maternity services, it is my right to choose my care provider and the setting in which I feel safest to give birth. It is not the place of the government to decide for birthing women where they should give birth, to do so is to deny them a basic human right.

After less than desirable experiences in the hospital system which resulted in one of my children being born with narcotics in her system unnecessarily (due to unnecessary and unwanted interventions for which informed consent was not given) I wanted to home-birth my third child. Unfortunately this was not possible due to there being no homebirth midwives available. Now I face the prospect should I have a fourth child of being fined and treated as a criminal for bringing my child into the world in the safest, most gentle way I know, allowing for the best health of my baby.

Homebirth has been proven to be as safe as hospital birth by the largest study ever conducted (in the Netherlands in 2009) with much lower rates of intervention and much higher satisfaction rates. Surely it makes more sense to increase access for those who would choose this highly cost-effective option which has shown wonderful long-term health outcomes for mother and baby, rather than force more women into the already overloaded and very expensive hospital system. If other women's choice of an expensive, non-medically-indicated caesarian section is funded by taxpayer dollars, then my choice of a safe, inexpensive birth which reduces the burden on the health system should be equally funded, not criminalised.

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