

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.

Primarily as mother-to-be I am choosing a home birth for early 2010. It is greatly concerning to think that women will not freely have this choice by mid next year, this is taking the freedom of choice away from mothers, families and our future generations. Home birth is a beautiful, fulfilling experience and is safe if allowed to be carried out with the correct support networks in place.

If home birth was to become illegal it would lead to an underground industry that I would believe would become unsafe as women will have to be hiding what is only natural. Secondly as student midwife and doula it will be of great importance for me to be able to support women in whatever choice they make, which naturally includes the option of home birthing. I urge you to reconsider the current legislations and to give women and our future children the right of choice they are entitled to.

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.

Yours sincerely

Sacha Rendoth