

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.

I would like to further comment on this issue by saying that my very best friend gave birth to her beautiful son almost 2 years ago. He was delivered in a home birth by two very talented and caring midwives. The joy and personal satisfaction that my friend feels for having the right to choose how her baby entered the world is something that you can't take away from parents. A baby is conceived out of love and it is a choice that two people make. The choice of how they wish for a child that they created to be born should simply not be taken away. It is unjust and unfair and I don't know how anyone could sleep at night knowing that they have approved a bill that will take away a woman's choice; a woman's freedom.

Yours sincerely

Courtney Carr

