

14.7.09

Monica Campo

Ms Claire Moore

Chair

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

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 had a homebirth with my third child in August 2006. I chose a homebirth because I wanted to birth my baby in a comforting, safe and supportive environment without medical professionals and their associated interventions, without the threat of a caesarean hanging over my head and with midwives known to me. I am not the stereotype of a 'hippy' home birther, I am an educated professional who took action to have the kind of birth I wanted for myself and my baby: a birth I never would have had in a hospital. The births of my first two children resulted in unnecessary caesareans and when it came to my third, I did not receive any support to birth vaginally in a hospital setting. The birth of my son at home was a euphoric and empowering experience and one I hope my sister, my daughter and Australian women in the future will also be able to experience.**

**Homebirth is a safe option for most women, please don't let this proposed legislation take away Australian women's right to choose homebirth. If a woman is able to choose an elective caesarean without medical necessity in the hospital system (despite the well established risks associated with caesarean birth for both mother and baby) then surely women should also be able to birth at home.**

Yours sincerely

Your name

Monica Campo