

14 July 2009
Connie Martin

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: 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.

My last pregnancy and birth in the hospital system left me scarred (physically) and disillusioned with that system. As a result I have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I would be happy to expand on the impact that this traumatic birth experience has had not only on me, but the rest of my family. I certainly hope that the experiences of women and families like mine are being considered? I have tertiary qualifications and consider myself an articulate and intelligent woman, but have been so disturbed and distressed by the hospital system that I could not go down that path again.

I would not consider another pregnancy and birth in the hospital system and had anticipated having 1 or 2 more babies. I am a law abiding citizen and have no intention of breaking any laws, let alone breaking the law by having a homebirth in the future.

If this legislation is passed, what are my choices going to be?

Yours sincerely

Connie Martin