

Dear Senator Moore,

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I have three children, each born at home, in different houses and with different support people, but with the same main midwife for all three. The journey of choosing to birth at home with someone I had the space and time to create a relationship with was invaluable to me. Each birth has contributed to my self-esteem and body image in a positive manner, and in that sense, the empowering effects of being able to choose how and where I wanted to birth are still being experienced by myself and those around me.

I am very concerned that, should this new legislation be passed with no amendments, women may not have the opportunity to choose to birth at home. I feel this would be an absolutely untenable situation.

My husband's mother gave birth to him in the 70s, and was tied down during his birth. This was not because she was mentally or physically incapacitated, but simply because it was procedure at that hospital at that time. The negative memory of his birth remains with her today. If midwives end up being excluded from the Medicare funding and indemnity arrangement, and therefore unable to practice in people's homes, I would consider this a similarly gross breach of freedom. This is why I feel compelled to write and urge the committee to rethink this legislation.

I also believe that if home-midwifery were made illegal, a certain percentage of women would still choose this path, with no hospital backup, or even without any midwife at all. This would bring its own range of problems. Byron Bay coroner Nick Reimer said as such in his report on Jasper Kosch-Coyne, a newborn baby who died while being driven from his parents' farm to Nimbin hospital two years ago.

(see article: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/insurance-plea-for-homebirth-midwives-20090629-d2ik.html>  
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I urge you to amend the legislation so that it protects a woman's inherent right to choose how and where she wants to birth, so that Australia doesn't fall into a Dark Age of birthing. The importance of this issue can't be underestimated.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Funk