

16/07/09
Rachael King

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Dear Senator Moore

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

My husband and I are currently trying to conceive after 8 months of preparing my body to be in optimal health for conception, pregnancy and birth and we are planning a home birth.

This choice has been carefully and pro-actively researched and is the most suitable option that we believe and feel is right for both us and our baby. If this new legislation passes it would be taking away a basic human right of every woman. For this decision to go a head would be a social injustice.

I also wish to include the following. Although not my words, I feel strongly concerned about and in agreeance with the points it makes.

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.

Yours sincerely

Rachael King