

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 first child was born safely at home under the care of an independent midwife, the child I am currently gestating will also be born safely at home under the watchful eye of my beautiful independent midwife. It kills me to think that my choice to birth my future children safely at home under the care of an independent midwife (the same that witnessed my first two children's births) would be taken away if the said legislation is passed. I consider this as a violation to my rights as a human being.

This not only effects me as a mother and as a woman but also as a professional. I have recently finished my midwifery studies (the 'right' way) to practice midwifery as an independent midwife in the comfort and safety of women's homes. I am now greatly upset that I have wasted 5 years of my life (and money) studying (Nursing and midwifery) for a piece of paper (my registration) that will only inhibit my passion and practice in the future if this legislation is passed.

Yours sincerely

Holly Meyer