

Senator Moore

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

I am writing to state my concerns regarding legislative action, which effectively excludes private professional midwives from practicing home based midwifery as of 2010, when the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for all Health Professionals will take effect, due to a current loophole created by intersecting pieces of legislation. This is due to registration being based on having private indemnity insurance, which private home midwives will be currently unable to procure due to their low numbers, unless intervention at the level of state or federal occurs.

I have worked with families in childcare, foster care, youth work and as a Child Safety Officer. Through these experiences and Child and Family Studies I have come to value health choices which strengthen women's self determination and health, and that of their children and communities. Many women feel (and rightly so) most comfortable and safe birthing within their home environment. I believe it is imperative to provide all Queensland women with choice in evidence based pregnancy and birth options, including homebirth. Though homebirths have often been portrayed as the unsafe fringe practices of those with alternative lifestyles, professional midwife attended homebirths are a standard part of regular care in many European nations, and have statistically been shown to be as safe as hospital delivery. Without this option, many women have expressed they will still birth at home due to the current medical system which treats pregnancy and birth as illness. Unattended homebirth has been consistently demonstrated to be incredibly unsafe, placing mother and baby at risk. Hence, I urge you to support measures which back the health choices of women and families within your state.

I hope you take a productive and positive interest in this matter.

Yours Sincerely

Felicity St.John