

14th July 2009

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 am greatly saddened by the fact that these new bills will take away a woman's **right to choose** where she has her baby. I strongly believe we should be able to choose where we give birth provided it is a safe environment and you have no major health issues.

I gave birth to two wonderful daughters in 1987 and 1989 at home with a wonderful midwife. It was a fantastic experience that was never to be repeated for both my husband and myself. I had a 9lb and an 8.4lb baby with no drugs or intervention.

Surely in this modern age of democracy we have rights which include where we give birth. My daughter is now considering this experience and I am VERY ANGRY that she may not have the opportunity to choose.

Why cannot the home birth midwives have access to the Medicare funding, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium as they provide care for women to give birth at home? This could save the government millions of dollars in health care costs, so the government should be encouraging this type of individual service.

The countries like United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand provide a wonderful home birthing service where people are encouraged to choose where they give birth.

Why would Australia not support this service or are they accommodating the strong lobby group from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) who wants to keep their lucrative hold on this money making health industry.

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.

I am very angry about this bill as I believe we have a RIGHT to choose in this country, which is what makes Australia such a great place to live.

I am also GREATLY concerned that it may drive home births underground which will be more dangerous, as people are very passionate about this issue.

Yours sincerely

Anita Saunders