

16th July 2009

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Moore

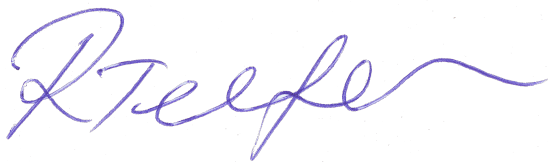
Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I write to express my concern about the above bills, as a mother who has birthed at home under the care of a midwife and as a midwife who cares for women planning to birth at home.

These bills will remove a woman's choice to birth at home, as privately practicing midwives will be denied access to professional indemnity insurance for this aspect of their care. There are many women who would feel afraid to birth at home, but there are those who are just as afraid to birth in a hospital. Birth is such a private and personal experience that can occur so much more easily if a woman feels safe, is comfortable and relaxed, and is surrounded by people she knows and trusts. This is so important for some women. Please do not restrict their right to their "safe" birth by forcing them to birth in environments that feel frightening to them. Restricting women's choices in this way is as sensible as forcing all women to birth at home, it simply does not suit every woman.

There are strong arguments both for and against homebirth, often focusing on the safety of the environment. If the experts can't agree, why not leave the final decision to the woman?

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Telfer