

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.

We have five beautiful children in our family, three of which were born at home with midwives who were the utmost professionals who helped us with our desire to have a safe, empowering and beautiful homebirth. I am totally outraged that my children and other friends may not be able to safely choose this option when they want to have children - i see this as a total abuse of their basic human rights to choose the path they wish to take in relation to their births. Homebirth may not be for everyone though it is a desire for many of us and the option should be there for women and families to choose. We need to be able to choose experienced midwives to attend these births. These amazing midwives are not criminals - they are incredible people who assist in helping children be brought into the world in a peaceful environment. That has to be good for the world. Furthermore economically it makes so much sense - it would cost the government health system a whole

lot less if they provided medicare funding to homebirth midwives rather than trying to outlaw these amazing people. It costs a lot more to have women birth in a hospital environment. There are many nations in the world where homebirth is a given in an uncomplicated birth senario. Please dont allow the medical fraternity to try to totally control birth. Please dont take away this basic human right to choose - from us and our children. Please!

Yours sincerely

Christos Miliankos