HB 7148: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNİUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Testimony for Public Hearing
Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2019

Ash Draper
Hamden CT

Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee,

I write in strong support of Bill Number 7148: An act concerning the state budget for the biennium ending June 13th 2021, and making appropriations therefor.

My name is Ash Draper and I serve the women of New Haven as a licensed certified nurse-midwife. I first moved to Connecticut to attend Yale University School of Nursing for my graduate training. I recently returned to CT to serve as faculty in Yale’s certified nurse midwife and women’s health nurse practitioner program. As a practicing midwife, I serve marginalized women at the Cornell Scott Hill Health Center and deliver babies at Yale New Haven Hospital Saint Raphael Campus. I am writing for myself and my words do not represent the views of the organizations for which I work.

- **Equal reimbursement will NOT cost the state more money, it would save money.** Data supports that midwifery care decreases expensive and unnecessary interventions while *improving the health of mom and baby.*
- **Unequal pay means few practices can afford to care for our most needy women.** *Improving Medicaid reimbursement rates will encourage practices to open their doors to those on Medicaid.* This will improve overall health in our state, decreasing healthcare costs.
- In making this change, CT can join the ranks of our neighboring states MA, NH, RI, VT, and ME. This means all of New England will have fair reimbursement for midwives and better health for families.
- **Medicaid rates set the standard for other insurers.** Fair reimbursement of midwives will help CT better *retain top midwife graduates from Yale and Fairfield Universities* thus improving care of CT women and helping to improve outcomes of marginalized women. As a graduate of Yale, I can sadly report that only one of my classmates stayed to practice in CT.
- **Midwives are autonomous healthcare providers,** meaning they work under their own license, not that of a physician. The World Health Organization has deemed the year 2020 *“the year of the nurse and midwife”* recognizing the essential care midwives provide around the world.
- A big headline nationally has been **maternal health and mortality,** especially that of women of color. This is a reality and not just a headline. *Midwifery care has been shown to improve outcomes dramatically.* The US is ranked 47th in the world, surpassed by countries like England and Australia where midwifery care is widely utilized and respected. **We have the highest mortality rate of any developed country.**
- In Summary: **Midwives care for women across their lifespan,** from teens to women through menopause. You do not need to be pregnant to see a midwife. Equal reimbursement will lead to more midwives. More midwives in CT will allow better access to healthcare. This access will make necessary preventative screening, like mammograms and pap smears, more readily available. Regular screening leads to healthier women and earlier diagnosis of issues, thus lowering overall healthcare cost while bettering quality of life in our state.

Again, I write in strong support of HB 7148 and have included my contact info below.

I truly appreciate your service, and I thank you for considering this important issue.
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