Bill Number: SB7148: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNium ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

Chairs and members of the Human Services Committee, I write in support of SB 7148,

My name is Krista Mehlhaff. I am currently a physician fellow in Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) at Yale School of Medicine. I have worked with certified nurse-midwives throughout my career which includes three years as a general OB/Gyn prior to starting my MFM fellowship at Yale. I recommend Connecticut follow the lead of the Affordable Care Act and Medicare and bring equality to midwifery reimbursement by passing SB 7148.

I have never practiced obstetrics outside of a partnership with nurse midwives. They are an independent and critical part of a patients care team. Midwives work within the healthcare system to optimize both the experience and the outcomes for their patients. In my experiences working with midwives we have worked as a fluid team. The midwives provide independent support and care of pregnant woman, they are highly skilled technically and in encouraging communication and managing expectations all while providing excellent medical care. Our high-risk practice also collaborates with a private group of midwives to offer medical and midwifery excellence to the wider community.

As a team we are working to increase access to care, reduce cesarean sections, reduce admissions to the neonatal ICU, and improve maternal outcomes. Reducing barriers to the employment and retention of midwives will help optimize our women's health workforce in Connecticut.

Our governing organizations, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) along with the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) have collaborated and made the following statement, “Establishing and sustaining viable practices that can provide broad services to women requires that OB GYN's and CNM/CMs have access to affordable professional liability insurance coverage, hospital privileges, equivalent reimbursement from private payers and under government programs, and support services including, but not limited to laboratory, obstetrical imaging, and anesthesia. To provide highest quality and seamless care, OB/Gyn’s and CNMs/CMs should have access to a system of care that fosters collaboration among licensed, independent providers.”

Please include funds in the budget to equalize reimbursement rates for Nurse-Midwives in the Medicaid Program

Respectfully,

Krista Mehlhaff DO