Testimony for Public Hearing
Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2019

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Bill Number: SB 7148: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee, I write to ask you to prioritize access to nurse-midwives as you draft the upcoming budget. My name is Andrea Polaski, and I have been a nurse on the labor floor at Yale-New Haven Hospital for 13 years. I request that you end the 10% deduction on midwifery reimbursement through Medicaid.

The main reason I support equitable reimbursement for equal services is that I actually see, every day, how much time our midwives spend with our laboring mothers. The excellent outcomes we see with our midwives are built on relationships and built on time, so reimbursing them at a discounted rate does not reflect the reality of how I see care given on the labor floor. By definition, our physicians are juggling their office responsibilities, as well as patients in the emergency room and operating room, so they are present on the labor floor for the time of birth, and if a complication is brewing. Our patients who are cared for by midwives have the ongoing presence and support of the CNM, as well as the availability of our surgeons if emergencies come up. Given the multiple layers of care and excellent outcomes we see with our midwifery patients, it makes no sense to reimburse with a 10% penalty built in.

Please support women and families in Connecticut by balancing the reimbursement to midwives. Thank you.