

OMC

Oregon Midwifery Council

5126 NE 20th Avenue • Portland OR • 97211

www.OregonMidwiferyCouncil.org

March 15, 2017

Chair Greenlick, Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Midwifery Council, I respectfully request your support for the Reproductive Health Equity Act (HB 3391). The Oregon Midwifery Council represents midwives in Oregon and promotes family-centered and evidence-based maternity care for all families in our state. In our work with childbearing families we see, day after day, the profound and life-long effects that access to appropriate health care can have for a family.

Access to reproductive health care is essential to the health of our state and our economy. Family planning, cancer screening, STI screening, abortion, and prenatal care save lives, preserve health, and reduce healthcare costs in our state. With the pending repeal of the Affordable Care Act, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians could lose coverage for these essential health services. We already know that inequalities in access to reproductive healthcare in the US mean that we have some of the worst maternity care outcomes in the developed world (we rank 61st for maternal health) as well as the highest healthcare costs in the world as we struggle to pay for the emergencies, such as preterm births, that the lack of accessible preventative care creates. Oregon has done so much to improve health outcomes in our state by providing coverage to our most vulnerable and now is the time for us to protect the progress we've made and continue to improve on the work that has been done.

Reproductive health care is both the point of access and the center of their healthcare experience for many Oregonians. The mothers, babies, and families we serve and all people need access to reproductive health care. Please help Oregon to take the lead as a model for the nation in guaranteeing health-promoting, life-saving, and cost-effective care for all people.

Thank you for your consideration,

Silke Akerson, CPM, LDM
Oregon Midwifery Council
