



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Public Health  
in support of H2209/S1457  
An Act Promoting Access to Midwifery Care and Out-of-Hospital Birth Options  
submitted by  
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Access to maternal healthcare is more important than ever as we witness the closure of the labor and delivery unit at UMASS Memorial Hospital, Leominster campus.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 44 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, asks that you correct a situation that denies medical care choices to pregnant women in Massachusetts and denies women their insurance coverage.

These bills would set up a state licensing board for certified professional midwives (CPMs). CPM certification for a midwife is the gold standard. Midwives with this certification have been welcomed to practice in Massachusetts with no need for licensing. Their fees are lower than in-hospital and birthing centers. The midwives only treat low-risk pregnancies in healthy women. They take the mother from pre-natal to post-natal care with one-on-one personal attention.

These bills correct a Catch-22: All insurance companies including Mass Health will not pay for services rendered by midwives unless the midwife has a state license. If a woman wants to have an at-home birth with a midwife, she must pay for it out -of-pocket.

The League's health care position enumerates services League members believe are of highest priority for a basic level of quality care includes prenatal and reproductive primary care. To achieve more equitable distribution of services, the League endorses increasing the availability of resources in medically underserved areas and training providers in needed fields of care and supports methods to promote the efficient and economical delivery of care.

We ask that you favorably report this bill out of committee.

Thank you for your consideration.