

Faye Zimmerman  
Buxton  
LD 1523

April 14th, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Faye Zimmerman, I am a resident of Buxton and I am here today in support of LD 1523 An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services. I received doula care for the birth of my first child almost two years ago.

I support LD 1523 because I greatly benefitted from having a doula during the birth of my daughter. When my husband and I decided to start our family, pregnancy, childbirth and newborns were all a very foreign and new thing to me. I felt I didn't have anyone to really help me through this besides my husband, who knew less than I did and didn't have the time to research how to best help me. I went searching for doulas and came across a friend of a friend who was in training, she would be offering her services to me for free, as she had not attended any births yet. It was perfect since my husband and I had been scraping by with mortgage, bills, etc, etc, along with all the stuff you need for a baby. I wanted someone really knowledgeable sitting with me the entire time, not just a nurse coming in and out to check on me and baby. To not have someone's full attention to assist me during the most important moment of my life did not make sense to me.

My Doula suggested positions and different ways to ease the pain. When my husband needed to sleep she helped me breathe through contractions, getting me water, or whatever else I needed. When my husband was awake, she helped both of us so that he could be more comfortable, fed, alert, to be present for me. When he would stare at me blankly because he couldn't interpret what I needed when I could not speak, which was often, she was able to interpret my needs.

My doula understood how important it was for me to feel like all I needed to focus on was my breath during my 50 hour labor. My husband was a wonderful support, but she was able to support me in a very different way with her very specific knowledge and talent. With 5 other babies being born that night in the hospital, I felt like I barely saw my Doctor. My doula was able to speak with the nurses when I felt concerned, she was able to represent my wishes when I was otherwise screaming in pain and my husband not knowing how to help.

I believe there should be more access to such an important addition to birthing moms in Maine. It's my understanding that complications in birth tend to decrease when a doula is present, thus less costly medical interventions are needed.

Without the opportunity to have a doula in training who did not charge me, I most certainly would not have had the ability to afford a doula and my birth experience would not have been the same. I know it would have felt more clinical, overwhelming, more frustrating and more strained without someone looking after me and my husband. Despite having had such a long labor, I have memories of feeling well cared for, understood, and even sometimes laughing through minutes of incredible pain.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I hope you will vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1523.

Thank you,  
Faye Zimmerman