

April 17th, 2025

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

My name is Bethany Woods and I am a resident of Surry. I am writing today in support of **LD 1523 *An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services***. I was a recipient of doula care during the birth of my daughter in 2023.

I support **LD 1523** because:

- I know from firsthand experience that having a doula positively affected the outcome of my daughter's birth and was a critical support to my mental health during the postpartum time. I had a straightforward pregnancy, but the birth of my daughter was very challenging, lasting over 30 hours, and I experienced significant complications following the birth. My doula, Sarah Tewhey, was a steadying and guiding presence through the entire experience - first during the early labor at home, and later when we transferred to the hospital. During the postpartum period, Sarah was a continuous point of contact to answer questions and offer encouragement and validation as my entire world was changing and reforming. As a first time parent, I cannot imagine going through that vulnerable birthing and postpartum experience if I had not been able to have the additional support of a doula. I didn't fully understand until afterward how much I would need and value it.
- Because doula care is not currently covered under insurance, this care is inaccessible to most. I was lucky enough to be able to afford paying my doula out of pocket. Ensuring doula care is accessible is so important because everyone should be able to experience this support regardless of their income level.

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,
Bethany Woods