

Amber Howard  
Bar Harbor  
LD 1523

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

My name is Amber Howard, I am a resident of Bar Harbor and I am writing today in support of LD 1523 An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services. I am a first time mother who relied on doula care during my pregnancy and delivery.

I support LD 1523 because I know from firsthand experience how valuable doula support can be, not just during labor and delivery, but throughout a pregnancy. As I'm sure you're aware, our hospitals and doctors offices are underfunded, understaffed, and overwhelmed. While my doctors provided me with adequate medical care, it was actually my doula who provided me with the additional education I needed during my pregnancy to properly support my developing baby and prepare me for birth. I am convinced that her knowledge and resources are what allowed me to be better nourished, better informed, better prepared and more physically well. I was able to deliver a healthy baby without medical intervention. Not only was my personal experience vastly improved by her care, my medical care was exponentially more affordable than it would have been if there had been complications or a need for more medical interventions. I believe that providing other women with access to a doula during their pregnancy and delivery will provide women with more support and education, a greater access to healthcare services (especially important at a time when doctors offices are overloaded and labor and delivery units are closing across our state), and REDUCE the overall cost of pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum care in Maine.

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,  
Amber Howard