

I support midwifery and oppose EO no130.

Courtney Moore

Hello,

It is distressing to learn of Governor Dunleavy's hasty executive order to take power away from our invaluable Alaskan midwives and give it to the State of Alaska. This is a medical freedom and birthing option that mothers in Alaska should benefit from for generations to come and the effort to curtail wasteful government spending. As a mother who has successfully had two births under the care of midwives, I cannot fathom how this care would improve with a board that doesn't have the intimate connection and training like they do.

I strongly oppose this executive order and hope our senate and legislature makes an informed decision to overrule this.

Thank you for the opportunity to share.

Melissa Bradley

Hi,

My name is Tamara Garner, I was raised in Anchorage and I call Alaska my home. My spouse is a teacher at the Anchorage school district and our son goes to an Anchorage public school. When I was pregnant with my son I used a midwife. I oppose Executive Order no. 130.

We mothers and new mothers need choices. Having a midwife was the best thing for my birth plan and for me. I needed the support the midwives gave me and continue to give me. Please do not get rid of midwifery in Alaska!

Thanks for listening!

-Tamara Garner

I, Brianna Onstad and my family, SUPPORT Midwifery in Alaska and OPPOSE EO No130.

As a mother, I must express that midwifery practices are absolutely essential in allowing women to choose the path right for themselves and their babes. Eliminating the route of midwifery care would not only strip them of their freedom to choose the experience they want with their birth, but would also force many women into a home birth without any medical attendance at all to avoid medical intervention.

I strongly support midwives and their roles in our lives as mothers, and the impact they have on the lives of the babies experiencing the world for the first time. It would be a terrible decision to disband their board.

Best regards,
Brianna

To whom it may concern,

Please hear our voice as we write to support maintaining the Board of Midwives in Alaska. I, an Alaskan mother and aspiring birth worker, am **OPPOSED** to the governor's Executive Order 130, which would absorb this autonomous board into the Department of Commerce.

I ask that you vote **YES** on HB 175 this session as it makes its way through the committee process and ultimately will be voted on by the whole body.

Midwives and families want to continue Alaska's strong history of access to midwifery care and protect the autonomy of this profession.

Governor Dunleavy seeks to dissolve the State Midwifery Board with gravely false claims by stating the Midwifery Board costs the State too much money.

In FY2021, the State Midwifery Board paid \$28,242, out of the License Fee Revenue, to the state of Alaska in Board Expenses. After expenses were paid, the Board had a \$67,329 SURPLUS.

Cost savings to the State of Alaska from the care of CDM/CPM providers is approximately 192 times the cost of administrating the State Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

In 2022 CPM/CDM providers SAVED the Alaska Medicaid program \$5,462,378 just by attending 6% of Alaskan family births.

Data clearly shows the amount midwives save the State far exceeds how much they pay in expenses.

According to the Alaska Vital Statistics 2022 Annual Report from the years 2018-2022, Certified Direct Entry Midwives were hired and entrusted by over 2500 families as they expanded their families, welcoming our newest Alaskans into the world.

Governor Dunleavy's decision to dissolve the Board of CDM's is dangerous to Alaskan families. Removing regulatory power from midwives and giving that authority to a government office will not improve safety. Putting the midwifery board in the receptacle of the Department of Commerce with the Boards of Hairdressers and Massage Therapy is detrimental to the safety of women and babies. Would the Governor think its a good idea to dismantle the State Medical Board out as well and hand that responsibility to the department of commerce? Alaskan mothers demand the freedom to choose how we birth our children. Alaska has been at the forefront of safety and legislation for out-of hospital births

for nearly 30 years due to the regulations and high educational standards for credentialing CDM's. Dismantling the Midwifery Board will destroy the careers of our beloved midwives.

I am deeply concerned that our elected leader, Governor Dunleavy, is seeking to dismantle the Board of Midwives to have a more "streamlined" process. As a military service member, I understand the importance of structure and regulations. Still, I also see firsthand how we fail our community by having specific processes so streamlined that the continuity of care is absent. I urge and plead with you to keep the Board of Licensed Midwives and instead work with the board to ensure that regulations benefit licensed practicing midwives and our communities.

I recently had my baby on October 1, 2023. As my husband and I planned our pregnancy, I researched my options and found that there are many midwives in this state of high caliber. We decided to hire Bethel Belisle at Haven Midwifery and were so pleased. It is of utmost importance that families have options, and women can give birth outside of the hospital if they so choose to.

The current structure of Board of Direct Entry Midwives consists of five members; 2 Certified Direct Entry Midwives, 1 Certified Nurse Midwife, 1 Obstetrician, and 1 public member. With their collaborative knowledge these five members set regulations in a manner that ensures public safety and reflects current provider standards in the field of Midwifery. Because of the specificity of the Midwifery field, it is difficult to glean how a state administrator will accomplish a similar quality of oversight for the profession. Ultimately, this may lead to restricted birthing choices for Alaskan women and families.

The staffing deficits within the department have been a long-standing issue, and it is not understood how eliminating the Board of Direct Entry Midwives, which are filled on a volunteer basis, would improve efficiency or maintain public safety. Alaskans are more than four times as likely as other Americans to choose a community setting supported by Midwives. Certified Direct Entry Midwives attend 60-80% of all out of hospital births in Alaska therefore; the issue of who over sees Midwives in Alaska is an issue for Alaskans.

Numerous studies positively support the outcomes of Licensed Midwives including higher rates of physiological birth, lower intervention rates including lower Cesarean rates, higher rates of Breastfeeding initiation and continued breastfeeding at six weeks postpartum, as well as greater client satisfaction with the birthing experience. Alaskan Midwives can also boast quality services and favorable outcomes for the families we serve.

VOTE NO on EO 130 and YES on HB175.

Thank you for your time,

Rosie Boone
Wasilla

Dear Representatives,

I am writing as a concerned constituent and as a Certified Direct-Entry Midwife licensed since 2016 in the State of Alaska. I am asking that you oppose Executive Order NO. 130. Executive Order NO. 130 eliminates the Board of Direct Entry Midwives and turns the regulatory duties for Direct Entry Midwives over to the Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development Administrators. I believe this is overreach of government oversight, and worry that it may strip medical autonomy from Alaskan women and families.

I began my apprenticeship in 2013 with midwives Dana Brown and Cheryl Corrick that were at the forefront of licensure in this state and both served for many years on the Board. Our Board has been in place for over 30 years. I have spoken to many midwives around the country that are involved in the legislation and licensure of our profession and they are aghast at this move to eliminate our board. One of the first things many of them say is how Alaska is a model of midwifery. Our history, legislative action, regulation and practice standards serve as a flagship for many other states. We have the highest rates of consumers of community midwifery and people who choose to give birth at home or in community birth centers. We have a rural population, yet we are able to maintain choice for our population when it comes to their maternity care provider and where they give birth. There are many places in our country that are considered maternity care deserts where midwifery is unnecessarily restricted and maternal and infant mortality rates are equally concerning. Restricting our autonomy in a state like ours would be a step back and would put our public safety and families at risk. I believe the Governor is misinformed on this issue as our board is self-sustaining and serves to regulate a profession that has served thousands of families over many decades. The bottom line is that executive order 130 is unnecessary, could impact the availability of safe community maternity care and is blatantly un-Alaskan.

Kate Parks CDM CPM
ABLEMIDWIFE LLC

Good evening,

I am writing to state my opposition to EO 130, the dissolving of the Midwifery Board. I strongly support the Midwifery Board and it would be a great disservice to our state and its residents to dissolve it. Please vote NO on EO 130.

Thank you,

Camille Broussard
Nikisk, AK

Dear Committee Member,

I am writing as a concerned constituent and consumer/supporter of Alaskan Midwives. I am asking that you oppose Executive Order NO. 130.

Executive Order NO. 130 eliminates the Board of Direct Entry Midwives and turns the regulatory duties for Direct Entry Midwives over to the Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development (DCCED) Administrators. Would you want an automotive mechanic overseeing cardiothoracic surgery? No. These professions are distinct in their practice, and the professionals of the respective trade possess different training, lenses, and skills. Similarly, the DCCED has no business overseeing the certification and regulation of Certified Direct Entry Midwives.

The profession of midwifery is essential for the safe, accessible, and evidence-based care of patients in rural and urban areas. EO 130 jeopardizes public safety by transferring the role of a professional medical board to the DCCED. In so doing, it will exclude the experienced minds and voices of midwives, the true holders of midwifery knowledge. It will instead provide all regulatory control to government administrators who do not understand the dynamic of the profession.

In addition to risking public safety, it will reduce access to care. Direct-entry midwives will lose the ability to bill insurances, which require the profession to be overseen by a professional licensing board to receive reimbursement. I personally see a Direct Entry Midwife for prenatal care and will continue to see her throughout my labor and early postpartum; I would lose this ability in the future if EO 130 is adopted. This likely unintentional byproduct of EO 130 illustrates how out of touch Governor Dunlevy is with the state healthcare delivery and the downstream effects of abolishing professional practice boards. I do not want to see provider choice or birthing options restricted for myself or future consumers of Midwifery care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm Regards,

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Callie Dietrich, RN

I'm writing you to express my concern about the Governor's EO 130 to dissolve the Midwife Board into a state department of bureaucrats. This is a step backwards for midwives across the state. It will potentially lead to further restrictions of scope of practice and the ability for Alaskan families to choose this type of maternity care.

Furthermore it will have unknown consequences for public health and safety of birthing women in Alaska. Have you heard of a group calling themselves "Birthkeepers"? They are a group of untrained and unlicensed women already providing maternity care and assisting women in home births right here in Alaska. They are part of a nationwide group that are doing this due to the "high costs" and "too restrictive regulations" on licensed healthcare providers including CPM and CDMs in Alaska.

There has also been a rise in planned "unassisted" home births in Alaska for the same reasons.

Any further restrictions on Alaska's licensed midwives will undoubtedly increase the dangerous practice of women choosing this form of childbirth that will potentially lead to serious complications including infant and maternal mortality rates.

The current board members have been working diligently to address these issues over the past four years. The current board has also worked on updating the 40 year old statutes and regulations to update them to current national standards of midwifery as defined by NARM (North American Registry of Midwives) that all states use as their standard for training and certifying credentials for midwives.

As for fiscal responsibility and costs associated with the board, the board has ALWAYS BEEN SELF FUNDED through licensing fees. The board was in the red in past years but this board has also worked to remedy that and now has a surplus of funds as stated in the legislative audit 2022 page 9 (schedule of revenues and expenditures) and still has a surplus of funds that will be included in the current ongoing audit.

So the claims that the board is having "financial struggles" is false and misleading. If anyone from the legislature or the Governor's office would actually take the time to sit down and talk with the midwife board they would know this. They would also know that according to a 2022 Alaska midwife costs savings report they would know that CDM midwives in Alaska saved the state Medicaid over \$5.4 million dollars in that year alone.

I find it most troubling that no one from the Governor's office or the state legislature has reached out to the midwife board or the board of MAA (Midwife Association of Alaska) to discuss this matter. It is now my understanding there will be a legislative committee meeting on January 31 and not one single licensed midwife has been invited to comment. This doesn't sound like a democratic or transparent process!

I voted for Governor Dunleavy, I've supported him through some of his most difficult decisions and policies but it is my opinion he has missed the mark on this one. It is also my opinion that's due to a campaign of misinformation and defamatory comments and statements made by certain individuals that have a direct conflict of interests with midwives and maternity care in Alaska. It frustrates me that when such criticisms and accusations are made that our elected representatives do not take the time to research and verify these claims! Politics is a dirty game of "mudslinging" and politically motivated propaganda!

All I ask is to take the time to contact and listen to both sides of any and every issue. Look for the biased opinions and motives. After all isn't that what an elected "representative" of the people does? Are you in that office to represent the majority of your constituents or just the ones that have the most money, power and influence?

Respectfully (but frustrated) Bob Pugh

