

Dear House Representatives,

I have sent each of you a copy of this email. However, I wanted to ensure that the voices of Alaskan Midwives are heard and this letter becomes part of the permanent record.

My name is Onica Sprokkreeff and I am the president of the Midwives Association of Alaska. As news of Executive Order NO.130 expediently spread throughout our Association's membership this past week, it was met with great alarm concerning the future of Midwifery in Alaska. The following letter is an expression of concern and is in opposition to Executive Order NO.130.

The use of Certified Direct Entry Midwives and autonomy for birthing options has been highly valued by many Alaskans for over three decades. Alaskans are known for valuing personal freedoms and self-sufficiency, and this mindset is inclusive in choosing their birth attendant. Alaskans are more than four times as likely as other Americans to choose a community birth supported by Midwives. Certified Direct Entry Midwives attend 60-80% of all out of hospital births in Alaska therefore; the issue of who oversees Midwives is an issue for the Alaskan way of life.

Maintaining the Board of Certified Direct Entry Midwives ensures Alaskan women and families who desire Midwives have the utmost autonomy over their birthing options and the profession, versus sole government control and dictation of Midwifery regulations which could restrict birth options for Alaskan families.

The current structure of the 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 Midwives Association of Alaska questions the Governor's decision in proposing this abrupt and dramatic change for our regulatory body. It is difficult to understand why this Administration would eliminate a self-sustaining board. The last Legislative Audit of the Board of Direct Entry Midwives completed in October 2022 determined the necessity of the Board of Midwives and recommended a four-year extension. Moreover, the audit recommendations highlighted the shortfalls of the departments' staffing challenges, in turn contributing to license processing delays as well as delays in addressing issues of public safety.

Staffing deficits within the Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development has been a long-standing issue, and it is not understood how eliminating the Board of Direct Entry Midwives, which is filled on a volunteer basis, would improve efficiency or maintain public safety.

The Midwives Association of Alaska requests additional transparency and reconsideration of Executive Order No. 130. We oppose the elimination of the Board of Direct Entry Midwives and government control of this important health care choice.

Kind Regards,

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President on the Midwives Association of Alaska