

It is my choice to birth my children at home and the current proposed legislation seeks to deny women of this right. The essential point is the issue of indemnity insurance being required for midwives to be registered. Currently no indemnity insurance is available for midwives in independent practice, i.e. home birth midwives. Without indemnity insurance they cannot be registered and thus unable to practice.

For State and Federal legislation to be constitutionally valid, all laws passed must be done so as to not discriminate between parts of the state and particular persons of the state. By denying indemnity insurance to home birth midwives the law discriminates because of the midwives geographic location or more so his/her right to choose her place of employment. Having your baby at home instead of a hospital is a **natural law right**. It would also be covered under section 116 of the constitution. Having a baby is a divine right and section 116 of the constitution says that the parliament shall make no laws to restrict your religious belief, practice, and observance.

To deny midwives the right to practice in as homebirth midwives as independent practitioners – thus making midwife assisted home birth effectively illegal is clearly in contravention of articles 6,7,12,16,18,22,23,25 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations)**.

Here is not the place to describe the exceptionally good births I have experienced with my homebirth midwives – I'll spare you the detail! But it is enough to say that all the births had excellent infant & maternal outcomes and were the most positive experiences in my life. So many women describe child birth as dramatic painful and downright humiliating experiences. It doesn't have to be this way! All subjective measures aside – a glance at the perinatal data collect unit reports make for I would suggest horror reading. The objective outcomes that are measured show an alarmingly high rate of interventions on all levels. This is in direct contrast with the excellent results recorded for planned homebirths.

Research is very clear that the birth experience is related to rates of post natal depression (PND), breast feeding and maternal satisfaction. These are measures that affect the mother, baby, family and wider community. Homebirth mothers have low to non existent rates of PND, breast feed for extended periods and have a high rate of satisfaction with their birth experience and their babies. This is NOT the case for hospital deliveries. The subsequent sequale from hospital deliveries places an extra burden on our health care system.

In comparison to hospital deliveries, home births are cheaper and expensive caesarean sections are far less common place. On a fiscal basis the savings made from better outcomes more than pay for the investment that should be made in providing indemnity insurance for homebirth midwives.

I appreciate that as it is currently, only a small percentage of women choose to birth their babies at home. If homebirth midwives had access to Medicare provider numbers and indemnity insurance more midwives would practice homebirth and it would be more accessible and affordable for birthing women.

I thankyou for your consideration of this submission. Please make indemnity insurance available for privately practicing homebirth midwives.

Yours Sincerely,

Sonia Martin

Victoria