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Impact Statement Provide By:  
Joel Meadows

My Statement is as Follows:

I am the father of two boys who were born at home attended by an independent midwife. Although my partner and I are not planning to have any more children I think everyone who gives birth should have access to the quality of care that we had though our independent midwife. We had one-on-one, consistent care over the pregnancy with a person who listened, encouraged and educated my partner and I.

Both of our births were complicated by issues that in hospitals would have, in all probability led to a cascade of interventions, and most probably ended in Caesarian sections. In both cases the skill and experience of our midwife meant that she was able to work with my partner to find ways through the issues and deliver very healthy children in a safe and effective way. We would not have got this kind of care and experience, or the space to let this happen in a hospital.

The skills and learning of independent midwives is not found inside the hospital systems where midwives are subordinate to obstetricians and hospital protocols, and are never given a chance to learn gentle, effective birthing techniques. This is clearly evident in the transfer rates from birthing centres, figures that turned us off the 'birthing centre' options that we explored.

Homebirthing with an experienced midwife is not just a safer option, it is also a far more economical way for the government to deliver health care to pregnant women. It saves on hospital stay costs, and well as saving on professional costs. With lower complication rates it also saves on post natal medical needs. Many developed countries have recognised the economic value of homebirth as a mainstream birthing option. I dislike the ideas of my taxes being wasted on funding unnecessary birthing interventions.

It is very frightening to think that the proposed government legislation will effectively put an end to homebirthing and independent midwifery as so much of the knowledge of simple, effective birthing techniques lies in this 'sector'.

I feel for couples who in the future will needlessly be forced into hospital procedures that are unnecessary and unsafe. It saddens me to think that my boys, born happy and healthy at home might not have the opportunity to help their partners give birth in the future. I know my active role in their birth's has helped me in my role as their father, and I think all dads should be able to be as involved as I was, hospitals don't give fathers that role.

Pregnancy is not a disease. Birth is not an operation. The existence and resilience of the human species is testament to this.

**Joel Meadows**

15/07/2009