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Hello,

My name is Maya Gutmann-McKenzie and I am a Certified Perinatal Doula and Certified Lactation Counselor in Providence. I serve the perinatal community locally and am in strong support for bills H8175 and H8174 - both these bills would help keep RI families safe and make perinatal care accessible to a much wider range of people in our communities.

Home birth is a safe and trusted practice that should not be limited to those with significant expendable income; covering this medical care under insurance would help a more diverse population learn about and access this traditional health care and give Rhode Islanders more options within their birthing experiences. Not only are home birth midwives available 24/7 to help support birth at home, they also offer invaluable home care before and after birth making it so birthing people and their families can focus on their pregnancy and early postpartum weeks without as much travel and hassle, often leaving people depleted and unable to focus as much on recovery as they should.

Lactation support is also vital to keeping RI families safe and healthy. As it stands, only the highest level of lactation support is covered by *some* insurances and that does not apply to the vast majority of lactating people in the state. Most people lactating need routine, low level support to adjust some of their strategies and get ample encouragement, CLCs are compassionate trained professionals who do just that. It is well documented that this type of support changes breast/chestfeeding outcomes. All Rhode Islanders deserve this support and as it stands, most do not have access to this care and the growing CLC workforce are not getting paid adequately for their services.

Thank you for strongly considering passing both of these bills that have remained supported by our community for years.

Warmly,

Maya