

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Lyle Andrews <andrewslyle@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:17 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** testimony in support of H5929 and Article 12 Section 7d

To Chairperson Abney and members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Lyle Begin and I live in Cranston, Rhode Island. I am in strong support of Budget Article 12 Section 12d and bill H5929 The Doula Reimbursement Act.

Doulas have a very important role in the birthing community. Most pregnant moms use OBGYNs for their maternal care, and while OBGYNs are essential medical professionals, they are very busy and very focused on the medical aspects of pregnancy and birth. A doula fills that non-medical space to help guide, educate, and support a mom and family through pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. Women who use a doula are less likely to have a Cesarean birth, are more likely to breastfeed, and are less likely to have postpartum depression. Doulas can also help increase black maternal health by providing consistent care in labor and delivery. This is extremely important, I have heard stories about black women who are afraid to enter the medical system because of the racial disparities in our healthcare system. A doula can provide that reassurance that they have a strong, knowledgeable support by their side and someone to advocate on their behalf. I have given birth to two children in the past three years and I know how overwhelming it is to navigate pregnancy and then give birth in a hospital. I did not know about doulas with my first pregnancy, but with my second pregnancy I did extensive research to help find the support I needed. I talked to a doula who was extremely knowledgeable and helpful when I was building my birth team. I believe the current system for providing maternal care is lacking in a lot of ways and that doulas fill in a large gap of what is missing. A doula is someone who prepares you and your partner one on one for birth, who advocates for you during birth, and who is on call for you postpartum, which is often the most difficult part of it all, and where you don't get much support from your doctor. The urgency of this bill is crucial because so many black women have to navigate a medical system where they are two to three times more likely to die than white women and black newborns are twice as likely to die. I was deeply disturbed to learn that a black pregnant mom, Lashonda Hazard, and her unborn child had died after being turned away from Women and Infants Hospital in Providence (the same hospital I gave birth at) when she went in experiencing pain. The day before she died she wrote that she didn't feel like she had been taken seriously by the hospital staff. If black women had better access to the services of a doula it would be an important step towards making pregnancy and childbirth a safer experience. We need to be taking any steps we can to ensure every mom feels safe and supported during such a transitional time in their lives. In closing, I urge you to support Budget

Article 12 Section 12d and bill H5929 The Doula Reimbursement Act.

Sincerely,  
Lyle Begin  
Cranston