

## Written Testimony to the Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Michaela Reynolds

Date: March 13, 2025

Re: House Bill 5858 - Prescriptive Authority for Certified Professional Midwives

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Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. Thank you to Representatives Stewart, Alzate, Cruz, Shallcross Smith, Kislak, Potter, McGaw, and Casimiro for sponsoring this bill.

My name is Michaela Reynolds, and I'm writing in support of House Bill 5858. This bill establishes the scope of Certified Professional Midwives' practice and authority related to prescribing medication for their patients. This will allow CPMs to independently care for their patients and allow the potential of this growing workforce to be fully realized.

I am a fellow of the Rhode Island CPM Equity Initiative organized by Quatia Osario of the Urban Perinatal Education Center in Pawtucket and funded by the Department of Health. I am currently training to become a Certified Professional Midwife to support families who desire personal midwifery care at home. In our Neonatal Resuscitation Program we learned that the last resort for a baby whose vital signs are steadily waning is a shot of epinephrine intraosseously. However, this is outside the scope of CPMs in RI. It is extremely rare for a baby to need this last resort, but I want to know that I have done everything possible to preserve the life of babies in my care.

Prescriptive authority for CPMs will allow the four currently practicing CPMs, and those of us in training to provide better continuity of care for people who are experiencing emotionally taxing circumstances that can make it difficult to book more appointments and share personal private details with people who don't have time to help our clients process the gravity of their situation. Early pregnancy loss is extremely common and emotionally heavy for families. Having established care with a midwife gives the family a person who already understands, a familiar space for grief, and a place that is open to discuss options. A midwife is a person families can call anytime of day or night for help who already knows the answers to many of the first questions a new provider would have to ask.

I urge you to pass House Bill 5858 to ensure that certified professional midwives can give our clients more options within our scope of practice and training. If midwives had prescriptive authority, we would be able to serve people in pain with more continuity of care and better equipped to respond to emergencies. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.