

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Akua Carson

Date: February 2, 2026

Re: Support, House Bill 7275 Requiring Insurance Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives

Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Akua Carson, and I am writing in strong support of House Bill 7275, which would require insurance coverage of Certified Professional Midwives. I would also like to thank House Representatives Stewart, Donovan, Boylan, Cotter, Caldwell, Fogarty, Cruz, Giraldo, Place, and Kislak for co-sponsoring this bill.

I am a parent of two healthy children born at home in Rhode Island under the care of Certified Professional Midwives. Professionally, I am a Certified Perinatal Doula, Certified Lactation Counselor and Childbirth Educator who has worked with a diverse range of families across our state. It is from both my personal and professional experience that I urge you to support this legislation.

When I first became pregnant, I had just moved to Rhode Island at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and knew very little about pregnancy or childbirth. As a woman of color, I was acutely aware of the alarming maternal mortality and morbidity rates in the United States, and the disproportionate risks faced by Black and brown birthing people. The prospect of giving birth filled me with fear and apprehension. Determined to protect myself and my baby, I researched my options and discovered that care with a Certified Professional Midwife would provide the patient-centered, trauma-informed support I needed.

Choosing a home birth with midwives was more than a preference - it was an act of self-preservation. I refused to become another statistic.

My prenatal visits were unhurried and relational, allowing space for meaningful conversation, informed consent, and trust. Beyond receiving the necessary perinatal care, these visits also nurtured my confidence and affirmed my right to a safe, empowering birth experience. After a deeply supported pregnancy, I gave birth to my son in my living room, standing fully in my power, surrounded by my midwife and doula. I began my journey into motherhood not with trauma, but with dignity, strength, and integrity. The postpartum and lactation support I received in my home from the Certified Professional Midwives far exceeded what many families are offered in more traditional care settings.

Inspired by my own experience, I became a Certified Perinatal Doula to support others through childbirth. While I personally chose home birth, it was through supporting hundreds of hospital births that I came to understand just how urgently alternatives are needed - especially for families of color. Too often, the standard of care in hospital settings is marked by coercion,

institutional racism, cultural incompetence, medical neglect, and inadequate postpartum support.

Without insurance coverage for Certified Professional Midwives, these safer, more respectful options remain financially out of reach for many families. I have supported countless parents who desired out-of-hospital birth or midwifery-led care but simply could not afford it. Requiring insurance coverage for CPMs is not about preference - it is about access, equity, and ensuring that all families in Rhode Island can choose care that supports their health, autonomy, and well-being.

I urge you to strongly support the passage of House Bill 7275 so that families across Rhode Island have equitable access to Certified Professional Midwives for well-woman care, pregnancy, birth, and postpartum support.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony and for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Akua Carson