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LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Health  
Friday, January 28, 2022  
1:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
S.B. 2661, RELATING TO MIDWIVES**

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lee Ann Teshima, and I am the Executive Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Midwives License Program. The Department appreciates the intent of and offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to exempt persons who adhere to the core competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and practices under the Hawaii Home Birth Elders Council from midwifery licensing requirements.

The Department recognizes the inherent difficulty in establishing regulatory standards for the practice of midwifery in the context of a diverse profession that draws from many disciplines and cultural practices. As such, the Department has been working with the Hawaii Home Birth Collective (HHBC) during the interim to discuss amendments such as those set forth in S.B. 2661. The Department defers to representatives of the HHBC to provide more information on their organization.

Previously, the Department testified before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Health on S.B. 2428 on January 24, 2020 offering comments, including but not limited to, the addition of a definition for “traditional midwife,” and how this may lead to create confusion for the average consumer or public about the qualifications of the practitioner by allowing exempt individuals who do not qualify for licensure as a midwife to use titles that include the term “midwife.” The Department respectfully suggests that the inclusion of a definition of “traditional midwife” may not be necessary to accomplish the intent of the bill if the proposed new exemption set forth on page 5, line 13 to page 6, line 3 can be more clearly identified.

The Department is open to continuing its dialogue with stakeholders to determine if an appropriate exemption is feasible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



*American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
District VIII, Hawai'i (Guam &  
American Samoa) Section*

TO: Senate Committee on Health  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

DATE: Friday, January 28, 2022

FROM: ACOG Hawai'i Section  
Reni Soon, MD, MPH, FACOG, Chair

**Re: SB 2661 – Relating to Midwives**  
**Position: OPPOSE**

The Hawai'i Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (HI ACOG) represents more than 200 obstetrician/gynecologist physicians in our state, and we oppose SB 2661. This bill would create an exemption to the midwife licensure law that was recently passed by this legislature.

We support every birthing person's right to make informed decisions about their pregnancy and delivery. We believe that people should be informed that several factors are critical to reducing maternal and perinatal mortality and achieving favorable community birth outcomes. These factors include appropriately identifying circumstances that may make community birth riskier for either mom or baby; the availability of a midwife whose education and licensure meet International Confederation of Midwives' (ICM) Global Standards for Midwifery Education, or a physician practicing obstetrics within an integrated and regulated health system; ready access to consultation; and access to safe and timely transport to a hospital.

In April 2015, our national organization endorsed the ICM education and training standards and has since been advocating that ICM standards be baseline criteria for midwife licensure in the United States. The ICM definitions are accepted throughout the world across 6 regions, by over 130 member-organizations, and by U.S. midwifery professional organizations. This exemption, as written, does not meet those requirements. We do not support unlicensed providers being given authority to prescribe and administer medications, to order and interpret diagnostic tests and ultrasounds, or to perform cancer screening, which are some of the competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (a First Nations group of midwives from across Canada).

We also acknowledge the critical importance of protecting and preserving indigenous traditions and birthing practices. The current midwife licensure law already has an exemption for practitioners of Native Hawaiian birth practices.

The majority of births occur without major complications, whether they occurred in the hospital or out of the hospital. But we know that complications occur, and it is critical that when they occur, the providers attending the birth are trained and competent to recognize it. In a recently published

study in the [\*Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health\*](#),<sup>1</sup> investigators looked at records from the neonatal intensive care unit at Kapi'olani Medical Center of newborns who had been admitted for hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy – a brain injury that occurs during the birth process – and compared them to Hawai'i statewide birth data. The newborns in the neonatal ICU with this brain injury were three times more likely to have been planned home births compared to the normal neonates. This emphasizes that complications during birth occur, and it is critical to have trained, licensed healthcare providers capable of recognizing and managing these complications wherever that birth is occurring.

We understand and appreciate the important role of midwives, as defined by the midwife licensure law, in healthcare delivery, especially to rural and underserved areas of Hawai'i. We were pleased that the Hawai'i State Legislature recognized the importance of midwives, and the rigorous training they have undertaken and expertise they hold, by granting them the opportunity to be licensed health care professionals. Licensure of midwives was critical to making community (or out of hospital) births in Hawai'i safer, and for future efforts at promoting a more integrated maternal health care system, similar to those seen in western Europe where maternal and neonatal outcomes exceed those in the U.S.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> Buchanan C, Kuo S, Minton L, Lee MJ, Choi SY, Soon R. Neonatal hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy and planned home birth. *J Midwifery Womens Health*. Epub on Jan 17, 2022. doi: 10.1111/jmwh.13309.



Hawaii Homebirth Collective  
1188 Bishop Street Suite 1509  
Honolulu, HI 96813

## **Testimony of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective (SB 2661)**

**January 28, 2022 HTH Committee 1:00 p.m.**

Aloha Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Health Committee,

My name is Kristie Duarte, and I am the President of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective (HiHBC) and the Chair of the Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force, created by Act 32 in 2019. HiHBC strongly supports this bill but offers comments in regards to the regulation of traditional midwives, definitional terms and the safety of traditional midwives.

The purposes of SB 2661 is to: (1) address Act 32, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, which stated that "the legislature notes that practicing midwifery according to this Act does not impede one's ability to incorporate or provide cultural practices" and (2) create an exemption in chapter 457J, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for traditional midwives from the current midwifery licensing law.

Traditional Midwives will become illegal come July 1, 2023. This bill will create a way for a traditional midwife to continue to practice under certain regulations. In the Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force Report, all twelve task force members agree unanimously on the following findings:

*"Traditional midwives currently exist in Hawai'i, they define themselves as Traditional Midwives and are in demand by the communities they serve. Traditional Midwives are recognized and defined by the Midwives Alliance of North America, and states such as Oregon and Canada formally recognize and perpetuate their practices by creating pathways other than licensure to allow Traditional midwives to serve their communities.*

*Each woman has the right to choose where and with whom she gives birth."*

HiHBC will provide oversight and regulation of Traditional Midwives through the development of common standards, accountability measures, and disclosure requirements. Traditional Midwives must adhere to the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) Core Competencies and practice under the Hawai'i Home Birth Elders Council.

In addition, membership with HiHBC requires Traditional Midwives to provide informed consent/disclosure forms to clients, home birth statistics, and have accountability through participation in peer review and the process of the complaint review and grievance mechanism with the Hawai'i Home Birth Elders Council. Consumers can know that their traditional midwife participates in peer review, and that if a concern is raised, there is a platform for discussion and follow up. A form is available on our website for the community and consumers to fill out when there is a complaint or grievance. Our traditional midwives are also required to report any type of complication or transport. After completion of the grievance and complaint review, the Elders

will determine the disciplinary action which can include suspension, probation, and even membership removal. Failure to comply with any of the membership requirements will also lead to removal of membership and their exemption.

Definitional Terms- It is necessary to keep in the language of SB 2661 a definition of the traditional midwife because traditional midwives are who HiHBC is regulating and providing oversight of.

Safety of Traditional Midwives- Hawai'i Home Birth Collective data on registered Traditional Midwives shows no maternal or infant deaths in the 5 years that data has been collected. **In the most recent two years, our traditional midwives have had no infant transfers, therefore there has been no abnormal conditions of the newborn, no assisted ventilation necessary and no NICU admission.** There were 2 maternal transfers each year, one for pain relief, yet both with good outcomes and follow up care from the traditional midwife after discharge. Safety is a priority in HiHBC and our traditional midwife data is required to be collected from traditional midwives. This data is only a piece of the Department of Health data, as our data is specific to HiHBC Traditional Midwives who are practicing, not just home births from all midwives (licensed and exempt).

Safety for the Community- Finding a pathway for these traditional midwives to be able to remain legal past 2023 must be a priority to keep birth practitioners above ground and giving the community the ability to transfer as needed, and not be afraid or make decisions that put themselves in danger, and discourage families from birthing alone. Traditional Midwives serve our communities across all islands, many in rural areas and their care cannot become illegal.

Very Respectfully,  
Kristie Duarte  
President  
Hawaii Home Birth Collective

**Testimony of Laulani Teale, MPH  
Ho'opae Pono Peace Project**



**In SUPPORT of SB 2661**

January 26 , 2022

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

**THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2022**

Aloha Kākou,

Ho'opae Pono Peace Project is a cultural peace resource focused on building cooperative solutions in the context of Aloha 'Āina, human rights, and genuine perpetuation of Indigenous well-being and cultural continuity.

We support SB 2661 strongly. Without the exemptions provided in this measure, important traditional birthing practices will soon be illegal. This would either cause cessation of these important practices, or force them underground. Either of these scenarios creates real danger for those who rely upon these practices for safe, knowledgeable, culturally competent assistance during birth.

Without the exemptions in SB 2661, Kanaka Maoli families, and therefore the endangered Indigenous birthing practices of Hawai'i, are seriously impacted. There is much confusion over this, because Kanaka Maoli practitioners appeared to have been eligible for exemption under Act 32 (2019); while there is theoretical ability to achieve protection of Indigenous practices through a complex administrative process that has yet to be achieved by anyone, the realization of the requirements of this exemption (recognition by or convening of a Kupuna Council under Papa Ola Lokahi) have been unrealistic for most traditional Kanaka Maoli traditional practitioners. While well intended, a fundamental problem of this model is the burden on traditional practitioners (many of whom are struggling just to survive in the current brutal colonial paradigm in which they must continue their ancient practices while paying exorbitant prices to live on their own lands) to achieve an extremely high bar of bureaucratic hoop-jumping. Another problem is the traditional cultural prohibition

amongst many lines of ancient Indigenous practice, against external certification or sharing of kapu knowledge.

In addition, and most importantly, it is critical to remember that the primary practitioner of Kanaka Maoli birthing practices is not the midwife, but the **mother**. Young Indigenous mothers reviving the sacred birthing traditions of their ancestors have the inherent right to be attended by anyone they deem pono, regardless of ancestry or any external impositions such as legal erasure of traditional attendant qualifications by government. However, this creates a difficult legal position for everyone under Act 32 (similar to the pre-1998 illegality of midwifery in Hawai'i, during which I must note that I myself bore my first child in Hālawā Valley in 1993, and was fortunate to be attended by an excellent traditional Midwife, Medrakanoeonapua, who literally faced down State Sheriffs and risked arrest to ensure the safety of my baby and me, as well as performing traditional resuscitation techniques that even the most qualified EMS would not have known, and would certainly have arrived too late to apply). In practical terms, the state of illegality under Act 32 creates a dangerous block to information sharing in a hospital transport scenario (note: before 1998, the illegality of midwifery meant that most hospital-transported mothers would not disclose any details of labor at all, for fear of persecution of themselves and their traditional attendants).

It needs to be remembered that while out-of-hospital births are statistically as safe as hospital births (and probably significantly safer during the current pandemic), accessibility of hospital transport is still a critical part of that safety. Ideally, a transport should happen before a situation becomes a true emergency, and transports are indeed often advised by the midwife long before they are accepted by the mother— a basic reality that is poorly understood on a systemic or medical level, where blame is generally placed on the practice of midwifery whenever a delayed transport results in an emergency. Previous traumatic hospital experiences and deep cultural or religious beliefs may be part of this maternal reluctance, but the most significant variable is often fear of judgment or of being “in trouble” for birthing “out of the box” in the first place, possibly resulting in potentially discriminatory systemic repercussions - a very real threat to ethnicities who face known, ongoing and disproportionate parental persecution through the historically colonial Child Welfare system. Clearly, this risk of transport delays is amplified if the traditional attendant is also forced into practicing illegally.



In addition to Kanaka Maoli, birthing practices of all cultures in Hawai'i deserve protection. What about traditions from Africa, Micronesia, or Amish peoples? Every mother deserves the availability of skilled traditions of her own culture, wherever these are available, and the truth is that many very knowledgeable traditional birth practitioners simply do not have access to the extremely inaccessible and very "Western" training requirements laid out in Act 32. Again, this forces a terrible choice between extermination of traditional cultural practices or those practices being once again forced underground, as they were prior to 1998, into the shadows of illegality and birth under very real threat of persecution. This is not right.

Birthing practices are one of the oldest women's rights issues in history, all over the world. Excessive regulation of midwives has historically been linked to misogyny, racism, and Indigenous extermination. We need to turn this history around.

This is a serious situation. I request that you please mitigate it immediately. While it will not rectify all of the problematic aspects of Act 32, SB 2661 is a good place to start.

For these reasons and more, Ho'opae Pono Peace Project asks that this measure be passed by this committee.

We are available as a peace resource for continued dialogue in the building of genuine understanding based on true respect, peace, and pono. Please contact me at any time.

Mahalo nui loa,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laulani". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Laulani Teale, MPH  
Coordinator, Ho'opae Pono Peace Project  
<https://www.eapono.org>



1/26/2022

**COMMENTS FOR SB2661, RELATING TO MIDWIVES**

To: Senate Committee on Health  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Berentania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

From: **Midwives Alliance of Hawai'i**  
Le'a Minton, MSN, APRN, CNM, IBCLC, President  
Richard Chong, Treasurer  
Destiny Warring, LM, CPM, Kaua'i Representative  
Melissa Walsh-Chong, LM, Maui Representative  
Nina Millar, LM, RN, CPM, Hawai'i Island Representative

Time: Thirty-First Legislature Regular Session of 2022  
Friday, January 28, 2022 at 1:00PM

Dear Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Senator Rosalyn Baker and committee members:

Midwives Alliance of Hawai'i (MAH) would like to provide the following comments regarding SB2661.

As the bill reads, it seeks to exempt a category of birth attendants who identify as traditional midwives. Much of the discussion around the need for this amendment to HRS 457-J has been to ensure protections of Native Hawaiian practices; and we 100% support ensuring Native Hawaiian practices are protected. We do note that Native Hawaiian practices are protected within the Hawai'i State Constitution and are therefore not impacted by any professional licensing law; these protections were redundantly listed as exempt within the Midwives licensure law HRS 457-J to reiterate that State Constitution protections cannot be construed otherwise. This means that HRS 457-J is not in need of

further exemptions. If the intent of SB2661 is to protect Native Hawaiian practices, our comment is SB2661 does not accomplish this intent.

At this time Hawai‘i has issued 23 licenses to midwives under HRS 457-J. Midwives Alliance of Hawai‘i (MAH) supports the continued licensure of midwives and MAH supports the International Confederation of Midwives definitions, statements, and core documents. We acknowledge and recognize that within SB2661 there is a reference to the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives core competencies. We are sharing that the document that the NACM created, titled *Indigenous Midwifery Knowledge and Skills: A Framework of Competencies* states they often receive questions such:

- What makes Indigenous midwives different from non-Indigenous midwives?
- How do we revitalize and bring the practice of Indigenous midwifery back to our community, by our own people?
- How can we better support Indigenous midwifery students to learn their cultural midwifery knowledge?

The “NACM undertook a process to articulate what distinguishes Indigenous midwifery and developed a tool to use this information. The goals are to support the return of birth and Indigenous midwifery to Indigenous communities through local education options and to support Indigenous midwifery students and midwives to strengthen their Indigenous midwifery skills, knowledge, and abilities.” The document they created of a competency framework was intended to guide indigenous midwifery. The NACM further shares that aboriginal midwives in Canada have the opportunity to attend a 4 year university degree program or one of 2 community programs. Upon completion of a university degree program and one of the 2 community programs, aboriginal midwives are eligible to be a Registered Midwife (which is our equivalent to a Licensed Midwife in Hawai‘i). Both of the community programs are three years in length and also meet the minimum International Confederation of Midwives global standards. We share this to acknowledge that there is still formal training, registration for the majority of aboriginal midwives in Canada, and accountability.

What we recognize within the edits of HRS 457-J is that the definition of Traditional Midwife does not indicate that the person practicing be Native Hawaiian, and if the intent is to extend it to other indigenous people, there is no definition for who this would include. We have concerns about non-indigenous persons utilizing a competency framework developed by aboriginal people for aboriginal people as the basis to self determine they are exempt from demonstrating minimum competencies of midwifery.

Further, we do not support unlicensed persons being given authority through the reference to the NACM competency framework to order diagnostic tests, perform and interpret ultrasounds, provide and interpret genetic screenings, conduct cancer screenings, and prescribe and administer medication.

Midwives Alliance of Hawai‘i has concerns related to transparency to consumers who believe if one calls themselves a midwife that they have certain skill sets and have been trained to adequately assess, manage and provide treatment for conditions related to birth, family planning and women’s health. As SB2661 is currently written, a Traditional Midwife requires no training or license but is granted full practice authority by the State without oversight.

Midwives Alliance of Hawai‘i offers these comments in hopes that the Legislature will acknowledge that Native Hawaiian practices are protected under the State of Hawai‘i Constitution, and ask themselves: What are we trying to accomplish? Who are we trying to protect? What is left to be addressed within HRS 457-J that cannot be accomplished within administration rules?

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

MIDWIVES ALLIANCE OF HAWAI‘I  
P.O. BOX 241 HAU‘ULA, HI 96717  
Midwiveshawaii@gmail.com  
[www.midwiveshawaii.org](http://www.midwiveshawaii.org)

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:21:13 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
christy kahoohanohano	Testifying for nawahineakauhiakama, PBC, Committee on the Status of Women Maui County, HiHBC,and more	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou,

Mahalo for the opportunity to once again testify on this important issue of preserving traditional midwifery in the State of Hawai'i and beyond. Particularly in the times of Covid, our ability to serve our communities has become even more so relevant. As we are living in a current maternal and infant health care crisis, it is imperative that we return to culturally relevant and traditional practices that have continued to thrive even today, regardless of massive efforts for generations to assimilate and oppress people of color and our traditional methods of health care. Now, we are very grateful for western intervention when needed, and collaborative care is really our goal, but women who are hāpai are not sick, they are actually in a heightened state of wellness if properly nourished and care for. The amount of love and dedication we spend with each ohana pays off, and we see it in our outcomes. The data will show, for instance in 20 years of attending births at home in Maui, I have NEVER lost a mom or baby, and never had a maternal or infant transfer to Oahu under my care! We care and have relationships with our families and spend hours to prepare, educate, and empower them in this process. We look at birth as a ceremony, a right of passage and treat it as such. We were trained by our elders in apprenticeship model and our elders and community hold us accountable, especially on a small island. We were trained to have integrity and heart in everything we do. It is not a profession but a kuleana to pass to the next generation. We don't want to use pharmaceuticals, or bill insurance, so becoming licensed is not a part of who we are. Not to mention that certification and training required by the law is expensive and NOT available in our STATE of Hawai'i!!! I have been apprenticing the next generation for years, and they have just barely began to attend births as a certain level of competency and readiness is VERY important to all of us. I do hope that our cultural practitioners training to be traditional midwives have the opportunity to continue the good work that those of us that have been practicing and preparing them have done for generations. I hope that my daughters have the opportunity to follow in mamas footsteps one day, some of them have already been to births with me in the past. I am a traditional midwife, a mother of 5 homebirth babies and an advocate always of reproductive justice in Hawai'i. I will become illegal in 2023 if this legislation does not pass. Hundreds of ohana will not have choice for me to continue to serve them if this legislation does not pass. If safety is the goal, please PASS this

legislation, before people start to turn to free birthing options as we have seen grow recently instead of having the midwives of their choice attend. Birth is an innate process, and if a women is properly supported throughout her pregnancy, and low risk, the statistics show that **HOME BIRTH** is **SAFE** and optimal even over hospital outcomes. There is a midwife for everyone, please ensure that traditional midwives continue to be part of our families options as we have been for generations.... **WE** are the **ORIGINAL MIDWIVES**....

Me Ka Ha'aha'a,

Christy Ki'inaniokalani Kaho'ohanohano



# Pacific Birth Collective

pacificbirthcollective@gmail.com  
pacificbirthcollective.org

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**PBC Board**

Sonya Niess  
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Mariah Strong

Ki'i Kaho'ohanohano

Makalani  
Franco-Francis

Haley Rabago  
Callahan

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

From: Pacific Birth Collective

Date: January 27, 2021

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

The Pacific Birth Collective strongly supports SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

PBC serves women, families, and various service providers throughout Hawaii. We support autonomy in birth choice, whatever that choice may be. We support this bill because as a birth organization working throughout the Hawaiian islands, we personally know the positive impact our traditional midwives have on maternal health in our communities. This bill would be a good step toward respecting cultural traditions, protecting the autonomy of women and families, and not policing women's reproductive choices.

We recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions behind the original bill, the exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, Native Hawaiian and other cultural traditions and practices have been controlled, dismissed, and lost to history.

Families in Hawaii always have and will continue to seek out prenatal, birth and



# Pacific Birth Collective

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postpartum support from traditional midwives as they have for many generations. To take that choice away from them is oppressive and infantilizing.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not safe, because women will continue to access these services even if it is not legal or recognized by the state of Hawaii.

There are many good reasons to support traditional midwifery. One that shouldn't be overlooked is because it will happen anyway, whether or not it is legal. Families already utilize the expertise that these women offer, and they will continue to seek this care even if it goes "underground." Much like abortion, it is safer for our communities if these practices are recognized and respected, especially if transfer does need to occur to a medical setting at anytime during pregnancy, birth or postpartum.

The idea that maintaining traditional practices is somehow at odds with health and good outcomes is not supported by the research, and these ideas take root in racism and xenophobia. Many traditional practices stand true to the scientific standards of the day. Time and again, when Native Hawaiian nutrition, social support structures, and ways of life are studied through the Western scientific model, they are proven beneficial. Perhaps more research around the practices of pale keiki and traditional midwives in Hawai'i would also prove this. We don't know because this research doesn't yet exist. A suggested approach is to improve data collection practices in order to create and pass truly informed legislation that would benefit women and families in Hawai'i.

Many women in Hawai'i seek care outside of the medical setting for childbirth. Reasons are many, but some cite safety. Maternal health outcomes in Hawai'i are on par with American maternal health outcomes, which is to say they are not good. [Cesarean rates in](#) Hawai'i are 26.8%, with one out of ten babies being born preterm. The [WHO reports](#) that 1 in 6 women in the US experience mistreatment during childbirth, and their findings suggest that mistreatment is experienced more frequently





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by women of color, when birth occurs in hospitals, and among those with social, economic or health challenges. [Another survey](#) of over 2,000 doulas, nurses, and childbirth educators found that almost 90% had witnessed a healthcare provider conducting procedures “without giving a woman a choice or time to consider,” and nearly 60% had observed providers performing procedures “explicitly against the wishes of the woman.” Numerous studies show that women, particularly women of color, are less likely to have their medical concerns taken seriously by doctors.

These are just some of the reasons that women seek alternatives to medical care when considering their options for childbirth. To not exempt traditional midwives would further erode their options.

According to the Hawai‘i State [Department of Health](#), 38% of women in Hawai‘i are suspected to experience postpartum depression (PPD), with Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Filipino women experiencing higher rates. There is a documented link between PPD and birth trauma. Continuing to limit the choices in prenatal care and birth for Hawaii women will not improve these statistics. Hawaii’s women deserve autonomy in their choices of birth provider.

We respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Thank you for reading this letter.

Mahalo,

Lantana Hoke  
Director, PBC

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:16:19 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lori Kimata	Testifying for Sacred Healing Arts	Support	Yes

Comments:

Dear honorable Senate Chair and members,

We strongly support SB2661 which will allow Traditional Midwives to continue offering their important traditional birthing wisdom to the people of Hawaii in a way that feels safe and respected. What they bring to the birthing families of Hawaii is invaluable and to lose their skills because legislatively we do not create a pathway for them to practice, would be a great loss to the community. It is clear that Traditional Midwives exist in Hawaii and that they are in demand. This bill is a chance to show our respect and support for traditional birthing practices! Please support SB2661.

Mahalo,

Dr. Lori Kimata

Sacred Healing Arts

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:32:17 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Anne Dericks	Testifying for Anne Dericks, ND	Support	Yes

Comments:

Dear Sentor Jarrett Keohokalole and Senator Rosalyn Baker

Please support SB 2661

I am a licensed physician here in Hawaii and a mother who has given birth at home with a traditional midwife also here in Hawaii.

I have also given birth with licensed midwives.

A licensed midwife vs a traditional midwife... one is not better than the other. What I hope to preserve here is the choice to choose. The right to choose, for myself if we choose to have another child and for my Hawaiian daughter to choose if she decides to birth children and for any other woman...I support her right to choose legally.

It is in this choice that birth and women's empowerment lies. It breaks my heart to imagine not having this choice legally.

Traditional midwives are highly skilled in natural childbirth. I am so thankful for their ability to tend women, myself included, in pregnancy, birth and postpartum. These skills should be preserved and honored. Yet I find myself here, trying to defend their legality, their right to even exist here in Hawaii.

Women's rights mean preserving and expanding choice. It's honoring another women's choice, even if you would choose something different. Even if you believe another option is the "right" option. Taking traditional midwifery away from women is a huge step backwards in women's rights and this is why we need to pass SB2661.

Please keep traditional midwifery knowledge alive by preserving women's access the to them. If women didn't want traditional midwives and their services, traditional midwives wouldn't exist. But women, including myself, will seek out traditional midwives' care because it's the care we want for ourselves and our families.

Support Women and Vote in Support of SB2661

Thank you for your time and attention to this bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Dericks

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 9:04:36 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Thank you all for bringing SB2661 to the table and working to ensure a safe Hawai'i. I submit testimony today in full support of SB 2661. As a home birth mother, student, Maui community member, and advocate for safe autonomous birthing choices I am deeply invested in seeing Midwifery thrive at home, in hospitals, and birth centers. In particular the continued practice of Traditional Midwifery is essential as an option of care for families in our diverse community. The practice of Traditional Midwifery at the very core supports the traditional process of birth and family continuity. The medicalization and white supremacist take over of woman's health has shown to be catastrophic. America is the most dangerous and most expensive place to give birth in all developed nations and specifically for black and brown bodies. The growth of Midwifery in all capacities is an answer to the current maternal health crisis. Midwifery wisdom outside of the medical model holds keys that can have impactful change on a systemic level in our community. Yet the collaborative care of all people that work in the maternal health field is the goal. The continued division of care providers is part of what keeps women at such high risk. Midwives expertise is on well woman care and should not be compared to Obstetrical expertise nor should medicalized certification be treated as superior to Traditional practitioners. The goal is safety for all consumers of Maternal Health care. Allowing for the exemptions and acknowledgment of Traditional Midwifery to thrive can be steadily achieved as SB2661 is passed.

The debate of legalizing and criminalizing a life giving role such as Midwifery should make us all alarmed as a population. This is not only about the rights of Midwives in Hawai'i this is about the lives of Birthing people and a growing family. Midwifery as a practice is not that of wealth, or boards, or of who is right, or power trips, Midwifery is an age old traditional accountable support system that has been in existence I would imagine since the beginning of birthing humans. As I think about all the supporting evidence and work of Midwives and trying to prove the importance of Traditional Midwifery I am infused with sadness and anger. The Obstetrical and Genealogical practices did not stem from saving lives for sacred protection but of male dominated control and capitalism. It is well documented that this practice came from the ability to control two people at once, establish care for the family, and for capital gain while maintaining racial disparities among the population. If it was about safety, then it would see the role of the Midwife and the autonomy that it takes for someone to give birth. In the past there was collaborative care between doctors and midwives but greed, population control and racism destroyed this collaborative care. OB's never and still don't have time for traditional birth and so they have created interventions to 'speed things up' and create more money in the process while working to discredit and annihilate Midwives. Obstetrical care is a life saving medical practice and should be honored and utilized as such. Just as colonization can try to erase the memory of

what it was like before this has also affected the birthing space. Traditional Postpartum is not associated as that of depression but that of healing and nourishment. Traditional Midwifery is the lamp post that still is walking through the war on the uterus and is still standing strong. Licensure as clearly stated it is awarded by the controlling state and they own the title "Midwife" and can take it away at any time. But the fact remains a Midwife and the training can never be taken away. It is their wisdom regardless of what the state and education system wants to claim on their livelihood and calling. A midwife is a servant of her community and future generations

The common debate about legalization upon the services of Midwifery is one that leaves out the care for the birthing person as the main focus of the conversation. To have Midwifery be defined by boards and states is to create a monopoly and homogenized view of Birth within the context of a patriarchal system that has been destroying and controlling the uterus for far too long. The collaborative care for birthing people has not been the focus of the conversation in the mainstream and those that are in control of the narrative. Because the bureaucracy of the systems and the out right usage of women as chattel for breeding has been a focus and tool used in the scope of regulated reproductive health care. What we see in this is inhumane treatment and the lifetime of issue, disparities and sometimes death of too many women and children. Given this issue of Licensing in the guise of safety is a global issue and shows many faces based on cultures and government controlled systems. The continued argument comes from people who create and uphold regulations for Midwifery say safety as the main reason for regulations. Yet they do not discuss the violence in the creation of their system and the sheer fact that 31% of people have c-sections. This is a procedure that was used as the last method to save a life yet now it is normalized and seen as a safety measure, or imperialistic savior complex. If this percent of a population is in danger of death why are we not looking at the true reasons for this and the crisis that it is. Intervention should not be the main method of a doctor's oath to do no harm. Yet just as the blanket of obstetrical violence and abusive neglectful relationships are somehow normalized to cut open bodies as routine but not give proper prenatal care or autonomous laboring support. Obstetrical methods are for emergencies, that is the training. Midwives are trained to support birthing people in pregnancy, birth and postpartum and keep them at low risk by the impeccable healthcare provided.

I find the history of reproductive violence and the fight for reproductive justice run parallel. The ones that tell the story are often the one who holds control and often create a narrative based off of fear. It is similar to the idea of critical race theory and why it is so important that truth begins to be part of the education system. Once truth is part of education the scope of licensing and laws can begin to change. The education, medical, and government models are actually steeped deep in white violence/silence and control of bodies in society not for the well being of all. The Uterus is one of the most powerful and mystical in all human creation. Why are violations normalized? Traditional Midwifery has sat at the feet of wonder, observations and care of this precious gift. The education of apprenticeship and observations in the generations are accountable, autonomous, and without end.

When one looks at Reproductive health in America and Hawai'i since around 1900 we see Midwifery was a standard of practice in all people, in all cultures, and the care is unique to it's particular people with intersecting lines of Midwifery care. We see in Hawai'i the strong relations that family and genealogy play in almost every facet of life. The Pale Keiki was there to protect the child, the mother, the family, and birth was a normal sacred way of life way. There were many practitioners that supported the birthing person and collaborative care with other practitioners was normal. Regulation was based on many aspects of life, not just one path and not

based on a written test that gives one a piece of paper to certify. This is a ridiculous notion within a traditional framework of life. Birth was a normal and intense process that walked the line of life and death. Birth is a normal physiological process our bodies were born to potentially fulfill. When we look at the time line of regulation of traditional health care practices in Hawai'i we can see the decline of population and actually close to annihilation of Kanaka Maoli. When colonized disease and colonized medical ideas come to a nation it is clear destruction. Papa Ola Lokahi has created an amazing time line that shows the regulation of lomi, lā'au lapa'au, universal health care, creation of Maternal care, population decline, and how Hawai'i continued to try to create solutions among the power control and death that was infiltrating by foreigners. Various other facts show that regulation wasn't about health as it was used for American benefit in the method of genocide. We can see under the care of Haole medicine the ali'i were wiped out at very young ages, fertility was also challenged. There is no where that shows that regulation of traditional health care practices achieved the goals of health but they do follow the path of sickness. When one talks about alternative practices we see that Midwifery is considered in this category as an alternative to the standards of care. We can see that this clearly shows who is in control of licensing, state regulations, care standards. Standard systems do not include these wellness models of health as one would see in a traditional society. Health and well being was the goal of the Hawaiian generations. Current Government defines what is the scope of practice for practitioners and the definition of medicine based on their systems.

The Hawaiian Kingdom was trying to establish systems to create new health care systems to deal with the crisis that foreigners brought. The American way then and now does not focus on health care but focuses on sick care. Regulations set a pathway for destruction versus the models of health in a Hawaiian view point. I bring this up to state the correlation of Traditional Midwifery and the current regulations that are trying to be implemented, It will follow the same line. It is not about the safety of a person because that truthful investigation would look very different.

The process of pregnancy is to be supported as a natural process that cannot be manipulated, and controlled without autonomy if safe outcomes for the generations is the goal.

There were various steps in America to establish and regulate Medical care. In 1894 The Massachusetts Act, The Medical Practice Act was created to define obstetrics and licensing of physicians. Other states then followed this method. The regulation and practice of Midwifery in the North versus the South looked different and was so because of racism and male domination in medicine. Deirdre Cooper Owens in her book *Medical Bondage* clearly demonstrates the systems of Obstetrical care and unrestricted violence upon the black female body for medical purposes. "The Father of Gynecology " Marian Sims is a great example of the perpetual violence that the education systems still teaches but yet leaves out the truth of the continued harm in the systems. Traditional Black Midwives were abundant in the southern states with thousands in each state. With the public health conversation always stated in the guise of health we see the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act of 1921 is again following this same trajectory. It was created using federal funding to address health concerns in the family way. What this did was directly affect the lives of Midwives, the care they provided, and the families in which they served. It was run in the model of white narrative which looked to control the "other" without holding personal accountability to the social crisis that the supremacist systems had on the lives of the people and society. It was racist at the core and created for control. Again it is regulations based on problems that create more problems that do not create modalities to change and provide actual health for society. If these regulations were for solutions America would not be holding

the title as the most dangerous country to give birth in all of the developed nations and the most expensive. We can see across the board laws that have caused harm and have helped. This is an endless debate given the perspective that one sits from. Yet basic human needs are fundamental, birth is foundational, and the prosperity of a nation rests in the health of the people and land. Hawai'i is exceptional in its potential. The grace of Medical provisions is a blessing and the care of Obstetrical doctors and Midwives should be praised. Educational pathways are a blessing to every society and this can not be highlighted enough. Yet what must be recognized is Traditional methods of healing and education are essential to the well being of society. One focus is sure to divide and maintain sickness.

We can look to Corona Virus to show. Collectively we are all invested in the end of this virus and the strength of immunity. There are different focuses and the system has focused on vaccination as the method. Yet why are we not making sure that people have clean water , immune boosting herbs, and healthy food at a pharmacy. Collaborative care in a society that truly wants health as the outcome must look to collaborative care and methods. Laws that force one method of health care or pathway have shown in every capacity to divide and increase disparities often by race, and economic impact.

WE must increase Midwifery as a normalized practice. To take that word and method of care into normalization. Hawai'i should and can continue create pathways of education so that local residents can engage in this calling and profession. If Midwifery is criminalized then every person choosing that path will have to leave Hawai'i to gain that medicalized certification, or only have foreigners moving here to provide care and precept. If the Department of Commerce and Health see the value of Midwifery then they should work towards options of having full spectrum Midwifery care and education be accesible here in Hawai'i. The Midwifery bill without these Traditional Midwifery exemptions will criminalize an age old practice that is coming to light out the destructive force of colonization. The Midwifery Bill without these exemptions would uphold the racist and patriarchal violence of the current medical monopoly. Midwives of all modalities are needed now more than ever to stop this public health crisis we are currently in. The role of the Traditional Midwife is essential in this process and SB2661 is essential. When we look at regulations, education of midwifery , and the care for pregnant people we can see the line of experimentation, population control, eugenics, capitalism, decline of long term health, and war upon the uterus in many ways. It may seem extreme to place all of this within the line of this conversation of Midwifery regulation but I think it is absolutely the forefront of this conversation. Eugenics is a conversation many people do not want to have and often want to disassociate from this. But Eugenics has been long used in America and other nations in the medical & education system. We see in Hawai'i the colonized destruction of the Hawaiian's physical bodies and lifeways and then the repopulation based on commerce, occupation, and growth. The American government has long used regulations for the benefit of their goals, not the benefit of the whole. The days are done that women's health is used for capitalistic and experimental purposes based on sickness not as sacred people being provided health care. Regulations change birth from a communal process to a medical one. Traditional Midwives should have many seats at the table and stake in the growth of Midwifery here in Hawai'i. I stand with the support of the Maui County Committee on the Status of Women, Traditional practitioners, and Birthing people in support of SB2661. Collaborative safe care for birthing people must be the focus. I urge for the active role in the state and health care providers to see the crucial need for Traditional Midwifery to thrive. SB2661 is about transforming the Maternal public health crisis we are in and Traditional Midwives hold a key that must be upheld.



May we all continue to work to bring accessible Midwifery care to Hawai'i. Know that when Traditional midwifery is honored then all Midwives are honored. The public health experiment of criminalizing and demonizing Midwifery must end as we have seen obstetrical focused birth isn't working. Collaborative care between OB's and Midwives was normal before legislation and certifications. Capitalism and Racism were the main reasons for certification and are still in charge. As we can see looking at boards and the education models, they are still teaching narrow racist ideas and perpetuating medical violence while harming students and consumers of healthcare. We see in H.R. 6142/s.3424 Black Maternal health Omnibus that institutional and systemic change is happening. Let us work to be in the momentum that this nation needs to bring us out of this maternal health crisis that began with white supremacist laws and violence. Traditional Midwifery is a cornerstone to bringing Maternal health to this nation again. Thank you for being part of the change out of the dark ages of capitalistic medical monopolies. Please pass SB2661. Trust in the work you are doing and let us all work for the safety and normalcy of traditional birth in Hawai'i and globally! I urge you to pass SB 2661 and together we can work to end this maternal health crisis. Thank you so much for your time and the important work that you do. We must look to the past to find the way to the future!! Please contact me for any questions or any way I can support you in this process. Blessings to you and your family! Pahnelopu McKenzie

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 6:05:11 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Alexandra Kisitu	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha committee:

I am excited to support this bill as it provides the care, services, and cultural and gendered sensitivities necessary for midwifery access and cultural practices. I wrote my phd dissertation on homebirth in Hawaii, and my research centers on issues of midwifery regulations. This bill helps preserve access to midwifery plus it relieves undue financial and regulatory burdens from the state, from midwives, and from mothers.

Thanks for supporting this bill - I look forward to showing my support on Friday.

Mahalo,

Dr. Alexandra Kisitu

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 6:49:53 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Keisa Liu	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Keisa Liu and I am in full support of SB2661.

As woman who has been through the full cycle of bringing a child into this world, I have intimate knowledge of the work required to make sure both mother and baby make it through the process safely. It takes a trusted village that empowers the mama and creates the external support needed to help her through the work only she can do.

Generational trauma is often spoken about under the very broad umbrella of racism. For brown and black bodies, it encompasses every part of our existence from conception to death. The work that has been put into this bill is to break this trauma cycle. To right past wrongs. To heal unjustifiable wounds.

I ask that you pass this bill in its entirety so that the mothers of Hawai'i can break the cycle of generational trauma by bringing them into this world as a woman who is empowered, connected, supported, and healed.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:48:47 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Haley Callahan	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am Haley Rabago Callahan from Pukalani, Maui. I come from a lineage of Puerto Rican birthkeepers and have been practicing birthwork on Maui for ten years. I am also a student at a MEAC-accredited college, working toward my midwifery degree.

**I full-heartedly SUPPORT SB 2661**, as it allows choice--a fundamental, legal right for women and humans in our country--for families regarding their reproductive health and birthing choices and experiences. It gives families autonomy and options for the normal, physiological event that is birth.

SB2661 allows people from our community to continue their cultural birth practices without fear of being legally reprimanded, and allows us to stay in our communities to practice, rather than having to uproot our lives to get the western education that is valued over indigenous knowledge. I can say from personal experience as a student at National College of Midwifery that they do not and can not understand what birthing in a community like Maui is like, and therefore --while the western knowledge I am receiving is valuable--it does not correlate with the world in which I am practicing birthwork here on Maui.

By valuing indigenous and cultural practices, we are able to have culturally-competent, local practitioners, better outcomes, longer, more holistic community support, and overall stronger communities and families.

This bill isn't even asking for all the same perks as the MEAC-accredited, western midwives. It is just asking to allow us to practice legally. It seems like the *least* the government can do.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:11:57 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha e Chair and Committee Members,

As a mom who has delivered two healthy pregnancies at home and processed the loss of 4 pregnancies (via miscarriage) I am in 100% support of a woman's right to choose who is with her during her labor and where she is laboring. This bill allows traditional/indigenous midwives a path forward to practice their traditional knowledge and assist mothers and babies without breaking the law. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Shannon Matson

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:11:25 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Charlene K. Rowley	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Legislators,

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony.

I support Bill 2661 as written.

Acknowledgment of traditional midwifery passed through apprenticeship is a cultural and spiritual practice more than a medical one. It is my life's work to ensure that these practices can continue to be passed down in my home community on Maui.

I am a bachelor trained registered nurse at UH Manoa and practiced as a Labor, Delivery, Postpartum nurse at Castle Medical Center for five years. left the hospital to apprentice with elder midwives in my home community on Maui who had been practicing for more than 30 years. The years that had the opportunity to work with them supporting out of hospital birth gave me insights and a foundation in my work that I would not have been able to gain from the current law's requirement to attend school on the continental US.

Hawai'i is a unique blend of many cultures and traditions which honors our diversity. For the past 3 years I have been working with a traditionally trained Pale Keiki, midwife on the island of Maui. We do not advertise our practice and only attend a small number of births and yet we are still inundated with requests through word of mouth referral. We disclose to our families that the best medical care is provided through dual care with an obstetrician and going into the hospital early if any type of medical care is needed.

We develop close personal relationships with the families we work with and spend many hours getting to know them and helping them to reconnect with their own traditions of health and wellness. Traditional midwifery honors the sacred aspects of childbearing as a rite of passage that requires personal responsibility for the birthing woman and partner over their own experience. After years of working in the hospital I can say that the work we do is essential and safe!

Traditional midwives are not an authority and we do not identify ourselves as medical professionals. We do not replace the need for medical providers, OB's, Nurses, or licensed

professional midwives. As traditional practitioners we are guides and coaches as women navigate the complex and individual experience of having a baby. seek collaboration and community involvement in all aspects of a woman's care. Please support this pathway as one that can help to correct some of the devastating disparities experienced by women of color in our community!!

Thank you for your time!

Charlene Kiana Rowley

Sisterhood Midwifery

808-214-0468

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:19:56 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jordan Hocker	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Hello my name is Jordan Hocker. I live on the island of Maui, I am a transplant and I have been trained as a postpartum doula and in the past have donated my time to families. I have a six year old daughter who was born at home. Today, I'm asserting the right of traditional midwifery to exist. I'd like to assert that the power of intergenerational learning, community service and cultural knowledge not be diminished via legislature. Unfortunately, Act 32, signed into law on April 30th 2019 does just that. The licensure requirements put forth are not available to all equally, with education requiring mainland travel, over \$40,000 tuition, not including licensing fees and time spent away from their families and the communities they serve. Furthermore, Act 32 criminalizes traditional midwives in Hawai'i, requiring that they stop calling themselves midwives regardless of their competence and years of experience. We cannot claim to care about the health and safety of all women but then cripple the competent practitioners serving some women, particularly those of Hawaiian and Polynesian women and babies whose mortality rates in the hospital are appalling and indicative of systemic racism faced by Black families in the US. Low Risk Birth with a traditional midwife is shown to be as safe as hospital birth and the cultural competency therein can save lives.

It should be also noted that it is not acceptable for any piece of law to violate the state constitution, but it can easily be argued that Act 32 does violate Article 12, sec 7, which protects cultural rights of Hawaiians a designation that should include birthing rights.

Now good news! There is a solution in the form of SB2661, a bill for Act 32. It carves out proper distinctions for traditional midwives and acknowledges current licensure laws do not meet the need of the islands, nor do they keep all birthing persons safe. I implore this body to recognize that now, more than ever, birthing persons deserve a choice of where and with whom we birth. Supporting SB2661 and the hard work from the community to continue to push for safe birth for all, would not only be putting Act 32 on the right side of the law, but it would serve as a step in the right direction to mend the reality that Traditional Hawaiian midwives have faced discrimination and disenfranchisement via licensure as far back as the 1930's. It is time to go forward, together, for the health of all women and families because when all birthing people are served adequately we all benefit. Thank you.



To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Whitney Herrelson  
Date: January 26, 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I am a newly graduated midwife, having just completed a 4-year MEAC accredited Bachelor's of Science in Midwifery degree program while living on Maui. I believe I am the first person to finish a MEAC midwifery degree while living on a neighbor island. I am the owner of Maui Midwifery.

I can speak from my own experience on how this type of MEAC program, which is required for licensure according to the original bill, is not at all accessible for most people living in Hawaii due to cost, a lack of qualified preceptors, and travel barriers. In fact, anyone not from a privileged background would find it next to impossible.

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from MEAC education and midwifery licensing requirements.

I do so based on 3 clinical ethical principles:

1. Justice: Historically in the US, in many cases, midwives' legitimization as providers through licensing rested on deliberately differentiating ourselves as "better educated," more "hygienic," and/or more "scientific" than others [midwives of color], while at the same time extracting and appropriating traditional midwifery knowledge, but excluding midwives of color from paths to "legitimate" education and licensure (Goode, 2014). The state of Hawaii is following this blueprint, and it is an act of violence. MEAC schools align with Western style of education that values medicalized midwifery practice, which does not represent traditional midwifery values. **Traditional and**

**indigenous pathways to midwifery are no less valid or valuable, although colonialism tells us differently.**

2. **Autonomy:** Hawai‘i’s pregnant people deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. **Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right.** Families in Hawai‘i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.
3. **Nonmaleficence, first do no harm: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders are dying in childbirth at a higher rate compared white women, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander babies are twice as likely to die as white babies (CDC, 2021).** Maternal and infant mortality disparities between racial and class groups cannot be discussed without a focus on inequality and racism within America’s structures and institutions, including hospitals, legislative/licensing bodies, and midwifery education institutions such as MEAC. In fact, institutional racism in midwifery education and authoritative boards is well documented (Goode, 2014).  
In addition, **racial and cultural congruency between patient and provider has shown to improve health outcomes for mothers and babies (Williams & Cooper, 2010).** The license requirement works to limit the number of cultural and racial minority midwives serving their communities, directly contributing to the harm of minority birthing people and babies.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Whitney Herrelson

Reference:

CDC. (2021). Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths — United States, 2007–2016. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6835a3.htm>

Goode, K. (2014). Birthing, blackness, and the body: Black midwives and experiential continuities of institutional racism. CUNY Academic Works. (10)2014. Retrieved from [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1422&context=gc\\_etds](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1422&context=gc_etds)

Williams D. R. and Cooper L.A. (2019). Reducing racial inequities in health: Using what we already know to take action. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 16(4):606. doi:10.3390/ijerph16040606

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 11:43:07 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Maya Marquez	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

**I am submitting testimony in full support of SB 2661. Such as stated in Section 1. Of the bill, disparities in maternal and infant mortality are rooted in racism. Structural racism in health care and social service delivery means that Black/Indigenous women often receive poorer quality care than white women. It means the denial of care when Black/Indigenous women seek help when enduring pain or that health care and social service providers fail to treat them with dignity and respect. These stressors and the cumulative experience of racism and sexism, especially during sensitive developmental periods, trigger a chain of biological processes, known as weathering, that undermine Black/Indigenous women's physical and mental health. Out of 100 births, only 10 to 12 will be attended by a midwife – and 9 out of 10 of these midwives are white. Yet globally, most childbearing women are attended to by midwives, only turning to an obstetrician if serious complications arise.**

**Midwifery is one of the most ancient of traditions and professions in the world, with roots that can be traced back to the healing traditions of Babylonia, Egypt, Ancient Greece, Vedic India, and the Aztecs. How has this essential role been so obliterated with barely a peep from feminists claiming reproductive liberation and rejecting male domination, pink pussy hats and all? How did we lose our way in this long-standing battle to keep the patriarchy out of our pregnant uteruses? And why is American midwifery so white?**

**Until the late 19th century, the majority of births were attended by midwives, many of whom were Black, indigenous, or immigrant women. Most midwives, including enslaved women, drew upon traditional healing knowledge and practices passed down through generations. Others learned their practice through apprenticeship, either to local physicians or experienced midwives in their community. In the early 20th century, however, as childbirth became medicalized, physicians emerged as the primary birth attendants and childbirth moved from the home to the hospital. Midwives delivered about half of all babies in the U.S. in the early 1900s; by 1930, however, that figure had dropped to fifteen percent.**

**Congress passed the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921. This regulatory initiative provided federal funding to states to establish midwifery training and licensure and targeted Black**

**midwives in the South, who represented the largest group of unregulated birth attendants. “Midwifery” is now an extremely white female profession.**

**With the creeping privatization of American health is the near obliteration of birthing at home. Part of this is the growing narrative that birth is risky, needing constant vigilance for medical interventions. Bringing birth into the hospital was business strategy 101: bring the customer to you, manage more than one labor at time, centralize care, and create a medical birth monopoly completely controlled by male obstetricians.**

**So the question in a country whose foundations remain rooted in white supremacy is whether midwives are ready for a reckoning. Can midwifery uproot themselves from its ties to misogyny and white supremacy in a workforce that currently identifies as 90% white. If midwifery is to thrive into another century in the United States – in the midst of a deeply racialized maternal health crisis, where Black/Indigenous women are three to four times more likely to die in a childbearing complication – then we need to start looking for a way to invest and support the growth of Black, Indigenous, and immigrant midwives of color to reclaim the legacy of midwifery that existed well before Mary Breckinridge.**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 11:43:26 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
flamie salsedo	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Flamie Salsedo and I speak for MANY when I say traditional homebirth midwifery is imperative to birth and women's health in general. I have personally experienced labor and delivery in a hospital and had the enormous pleasure of birthing my second at home just a couple of months ago with Birth Believers. There truly is no care or love like the care and love you receive through traditional midwifery. My pregnancy and birth this time around was overall better for myself, my baby and my husband. Women absolutely need to have the option of traditional midwifery in order to make the best possible decision for themselves and their families. Taking it away is taking away the privilege of being able to choose where and HOW women are able to bring life into this world. The choice must be their own for the sake of their babies and themselves. I have seen and can testify personally to what a blessing midwifery has been to so many generations. It is your duty to keep traditional midwifery alive for now and every generation to come.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:33:53 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Dave Mulinix	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am in full support of SB2661.

Midwives are a time honored tradition that has been around as long as our human species has existed. I have personal experience with this tradition as my greatgrandmother was a traditional midwife who successfully assisted in the birtsh of 100s of babies throughout her lifetime.

Midwives are an asset to our community.

Please vote in support of SB2661.

Mahalo, Dave Mulinix

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:10:49 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Daniela Martinez	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

In 2019 Act 32 regarding licensure of midwives was passed and implemented in 2020. Those who supported the bill often said it was necessary to **1-** Protect the community. A public health emergency picture was painted. It was made out to seem that emergency transports and unfavorable outcomes were occurring at home all the time. One legislature said there were emergency transports from home births every day in Hawai'i. There were only 302 home births in Hawai'i in 2017 and 325 in 2018 with 4 and 6 infant transports respectively. This is just one example of many inaccurate beliefs and statements that clouded this topic. **And 2-** to increase access to midwifery care. Let me break down points 1 & 2 and demonstrate that those arguments held no water then, and hold no water now - 2 years after the law has been implemented.

1- The belief that there was a public health crisis with out of control unfavorable birth outcomes was fueled by anecdotal stories. There were no statistics to reference at the time. When Act 32 passed- it required the formation of a Hawai'i Home Birth taskforce that collected statistics from midwives from all Hawaiian islands. Those statistics can be found here:

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FINAL-12.10.19-HHBTF-Report-12.11.19.pdf>

The data collected - which was congruent with DOH's data- showed favorable outcomes with home birth midwives in 2018 - when there was no regulation. We presented these statistics in 2021 in hopes of creating an exemption for traditional midwives. But we were told that it was too early to tell if the licensure law was working and if changes were appropriate. Now 2 years after licensure being implemented - there has been no data collection from licensed midwives to prove that the program is working or not. But we do have data to show that home birth in Hawai'i with midwives who were unlicensed and unregulated is safe.

2- There are approximately 7 actively practicing home birth midwives on the island of Oahu. I know this because I am a part of them. Only one of these 7 is licensed. Only one. Yes, there are other individuals on island who have a midwifery license. But they do not have an active home

birth midwifery practice. In July of 2023 - the remaining 6 unlicensed midwives serving Oahu, will be outlawed. So this bill has literally done the opposite - it has DECREASED midwifery access to the community instead of increasing access as it was tooted it would.

I am a traditional midwife and I have trained with certified professional midwives, nurses, obstetricians, naturopathic doctors, and traditional midwives. I have served in communities where mandatory licensure exists and can attest first handedly that it causes more harm than good. When rigid rules pinhole women into having limited legally approved practitioners that they don't want to work with - they often turn to birthing alone. Not because that is what they want but because they are pushed to choose one extreme or another. Please do not put Hawaii's women in this position. Please do not create more division and polarity. Please support the diversity that already exists.

Daniela Martinez Guzman



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 4:42:17 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sonya Niess	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Sonya Niess

Date: 1/26/22

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements. As a woman in Hawai'i who has exercised my right to choose my care provider and midwife team for the birth of my two children, this bill is of utmost importance.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long,

traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Sonya Niess

My name is Sovereign. I am a native Hawaiian girl. I STRONGLY support this bill and I have been testifying here since I was 7 years old... you might remember me from the capitol? I can't wait to grow up and build my own family, all i am asking is for a choice... a choice to choose who can come to MY BIRTH . This is not just my future but my children and grandchildren's future. When I grow up I want to become a midwife but I would be pretty sad if I can't learn my own cultural practices in midwifery here in the islands . Traditional midwives will be illegal next year please don't replace my culture and the way it cares for mommies and babies.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 6:11:00 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Makalani Franco-Francis	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I write this testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2661.

This bill provides a pathway for Hawai'i's many traditional midwives to continue to provide vital holistic care to the birthing women and families who need it.

These midwives are highly skilled and have knowledge and years of hands on experience far surpassing anything licensure or academia could provide.

We are all descendents of someone who birthed at home without a licensed midwife.

For centuries traditional midwives have served the communities who recognize, respect and CHOOSE them. Women will continue to choose them and they will continue to show up. Please support SB 2661.

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# Tara Compehos, LM, CPM, LMT

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January 25, 2022

PO BOX 635  
Pahala, HI 96777  
(808) 450-0498  
rootsremedieshawaii@gmail.com

Esteemed Senators of the Heath Committee:

I am a member of Hawaii Homebirth Collective, Pacific Birth Collective, Vice-Chair of the Hawaii State Home Birth Task Force and A State Licensed Midwife.

I agree with the language in SB2661 which explains how Act 32 advances an agenda of white supremacy by limiting access to midwives and basing competency standards on a white, western, dominant cultural standard.

I think that amending Act 32 to include an exemption for traditional midwives will go a long way in protecting access to safe, skilled, culturally competent maternity care for BIPOC as well as low-income families.

Sincerely,

Tara Compehos, LM, CPM, LMT

DATE: January 26, 2022

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
CHAIR, SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOLE  
VICE-CHAIR, SENATOR ROSALYN BAKER

FROM: STACEY MONIZ  
PUKALANI, MAUI

RE: SB 2661 RELATING TO MIDWIVES

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2022 AT 1PM

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Health:

Mahalo for setting this hearing date to hear important information on why the current law governing midwives must be changed to allow for the valuable work of indigenous midwives to continue as it has since the beginning of time.

I stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2661 which will exempt traditional, indigenous midwives from the over-regulated midwifery law that currently exists.

I am the proud grandmother of two healthy home birth babies whose births were safe and peaceful under expert support from midwives, the most experienced midwife I've ever met was never "certified," or, "licensed." Her work on Maui has seen multiple generations safely enter this world via her loving hands.

Birth is the most natural of all "medical procedures." Let's allow birth to return to its natural state and experience birth as the empowering and powerful miracle that it is rather than see it as a medical condition requiring treatment. If we search our hearts, we all know that we would prefer a natural, peaceful birth over an overly clinical or invasive medical procedure it has become.

Traditional and indigenous midwives often have hundreds of hours of training and hands on experiential training under other traditional and indigenous midwives. They surround themselves with other midwives and share their knowledge and wisdom with each other in their own, "continuing education," and their learning never stops. Many of these midwives are called to this profession and carry this heavy responsibility. Let us please let them share their gifts and give women who are giving birth the choice to birth as they wish.

Please support this change to the current law. I thank you for your consideration.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:07:48 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jasmine Fulcher	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: To: The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health From: Jasmine Fulcher Date: 1/27/2022 Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference Aloha, I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements. I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these. Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so. Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable. I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements. Mahalo for reading this letter. Sincerely, Jasmine Fulcher

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:42:06 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
CHEUK YING NG	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Homebirth midwife is so important in Hawaii.

We were treated poorly by the OBGYN from the hospital. They forced us to have a C section after 10 min we were submitted and no complication.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 6:27:54 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Angelica Rockquemore	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Senate committee:

My name is Angelica Rockquemore and I proudly stand in support of SB2661 as I have personally experienced the most amazing individualized care by traditional midwives and local birth practitioners through the birth of my daughter in September 2020.

Growing up in Hawaii, we're taught the importance and value of 1) caring for one another, 2) learning from the wisdom of our kupuna and indigenous knowledge, and 3) how communities are our greatest assets. Traditional midwives and local birth practitioners are the best living examples of all of these values and more, I (and my family) were able to experience it first hand.

During my pregnancy, my traditional midwives really cared for me as a whole person, not just my physical health but my mental, emotional, and spiritual health. They helped me really understand and value nutrition, how to eat nutrient rich foods like our kupuna did, they taught me techniques for breathing and stretching my body through labor contractions and honored my values and desires for birth by preparing me for it.

I see and experienced the traditional midwives in our state as exceptional community leaders and true community builders. They are an invaluable resource particularly for minority women like myself and vulnerable communities as they truly listen, empathize, and advocate for the rights of women, their bodies, and children. I can't think of a more important time than now to preserve and guarantee access to them for all women.

This bill is so important to support as it allows women like me and my family the access to traditional midwives and the freedom to choose. Our state has a great responsibility to consider and care for all members of our community and traditional midwives and local birth practitioners so passionately advocate and care for women through the preservation and practice of indigenous knowledge; we truly need them to sustain our entire community and future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:52:43 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Suzanna Kinsey	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I would like to see all my fellow women and birthing people to have access to birth in the way they choose. As birth is a continuation of our ancestral lines, it is our right to choose a traditional birth. Traditional midwives have existed before history (herstory!) was written. It is time to acknowledge and recognize this. Help Hawaii step into the future by legitimizing and exempting Traditional Midwives. I strongly support SB2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:54:29 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jaymie Lewis	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Honorable Senators,

My name is Jaymie Lewis. I am first and foremost a mother. Second I am, as the Hawaii State law allows me to identify, a "Traditional Birth Attendant", formally a midwife before 2019. I am also the current secretary of HIHBC and was an active participant in the Hawaii Home Birth Task Force. I have been in Hawaii's birth network for over a decade, facilitating over 500 deliveries within our community and abroad.

Traditional Midwives have international recognition and respect and it is time that Hawaii reflects this in a legal and just way. The constituents have spoken year after year for nearly a decade that they want their local, community midwives protected, not outlawed. We have met and collaborated with government agencies. Together, statistics have been gathered and brought forth to the legislation showing that midwives are not only a desired choice, but it is a safe choice to birth with Hawaii's diversified home birth midwifery care providers. We stand together in integrity!

Whether you would choose it for yourself or not, it is inappropriate to deprive a community of safe birthing options when they are available. Removing this choice away from Hawaii's birthing families only causes more harm, less communication, and less trust. This results in less safety, and if safety is the goal of the legislative body, the focus should be placed on building connections and understanding rather than exclusion and smear campaigns.

It is morally and ethically right to pass this bill and I thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:31:24 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Marisa Tyrell	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

My name is Marisa Tyrell and I support bill SB2661.

I am an Oahu native and as a mother of 2 I've been very fortunate to experience both a hospital birth and a home birth. In my personal experience, my home birth was far more outstanding in terms of the care I received while I was pregnant, the care I was in during labor, and birthing my baby at home. My experience with my Traditional Midwives not only exceeded my expectations for prenatal care but the care I received in my postpartum healing is something that doesn't even exist in Western Medicine. For example, as part of my postpartum care my midwives CAME TO ME to check up on me and the baby ONCE A WEEK, FOR 6 WEEKS after my birth. That kind of exceptional care does not happen in westernized medicine. My Traditional Midwives made me feel SAFE, SUPPORTED, and RESPECTED during my entire pregnancy and postpartum journey-- something I didn't have while giving birth in a hospital.

Women have been safely giving birth with Traditional Midwives for CENTURIES and I believe that it is imperative that we let our future generations be able to have a CHOICE in how they want to bring their children into the world.

Mahalo for your time,

Marisa Tyrell

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:15:16 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Alohi Aea	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I write today in strong support of SB 2661. I am a Native Hawaiian mother of three children who were born at home, and I want to ensure that my children will have access to the kind of knowledge and care that I received during my pregnancies. This bill will continue to provide a legal pathway for Traditional Midwives to care for the women in our community.

Recognizing the multiple pathways to midwifery training and providing a framework for Traditional Midwives to practice legally in our community is critical to ensuring that families in the future will be able to receive the important services provided by Traditional Midwives.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:22:28 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jazmin Diaz	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

**Bill:** SB2661

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**Report Title:**

Traditional Midwives; Childbirth

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**Description:**

Exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

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My name is Jazmin Diaz and I am testifying in support of bill **SB2661**. I am an individual, sovereign woman who is a receipt of the support of Midwifery within the state of Hawai'i. Without this service & contribution of birth workers I would not confidently step into the experience of Motherhood.

This bill will re-instate cultural wisdom & the ancestral practices that so many women of color have lost throughout the navigation Colonization.

Without this bill being passed families' of Hawai'i will further enter a decline of support & empowerment from the state of Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time!

Jazmin Diaz

4073502092

jazmin.diaz369@gmail.com

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:25:51 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Allyson Hehn	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

A BILL FOR AN ACT, RELATING TO MIDWIVES, SB2661

JANUARY 28, 2022

IN SUPPORT

I support the bill and strongly urge our state government to preserve the traditional midwives ability to help future families. As a new mom, I have been blessed with the opportunity to be in the care of a midwife and doula during my pregnancy and postpartum care. I have felt more safe then I ever thought I would throughout the process, and felt that I was in good hands throughout the birth of my firstborn. My husband and I have been through numerous doctors' appointments, however we felt as if our needs were not met and as if we were another number on their calendar. When we found our midwife, we were overwhelmed with the hands on support, guidance, and love they brought into our family.

With the current pandemic it was very difficult for us to attend doctors' appointments together. However having a midwife gave us the comfort and freedom to do our prenatal and postnatal checkups in our own home. Not to mention it allowed other patients who actually needed the hospital care to get the attention and care they may not have gotten had I been in the hospital in their place.

I am so grateful to live in a place and time where I was given the choice to make the decision that is best for me and my family in regards to welcoming our baby into the world, and I can only hope that you will preserve this right.

Mahalo!

ALLYSON HEHN

808-223-0529

allyhaunani@gmail.com





**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:38:34 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Joshua Hiebert	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Chairman of the committee and members of the committee.

My name is Joshua Hiebert and I support bill SB 2661!

I believe that traditional midwives play an important role for our families and I also believe that freedom to choose what kind of birth experience is best for every ohana should be protected.

Please allow through this bill the ability for Mothers and Fathers to continue to experience Birth in the ancient and sacred traditions that our ancestors have held dear. Hawaii should be a leader in protecting and promoting the traditional way of entering this world through birth!

My wife and I had an amazing birth experience with our traditional midwives a year and a half ago and we know it was the best thing for Ohana. We hope to have similar experiences in the years to come. Please support bill SB 2661

Mahalo

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:46:59 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kara Wong Ramsey	Individual	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

From: Kara Wong Ramsey, MD

Date: 1/27/22

Re: Strong Opposition against SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

As a *Kanaka 'Ōiwi Kauka* (Native Hawaiian physician) who specializes in the care of newborns requiring specialized medical care, I recognize that there is mistrust among Native Hawaiian and other indigenous communities towards western medicine. There is still much western medicine can learn from traditional practices to improve the health of our *mākuahine* and *keiki* (mothers and babies), as physicians have moved away from outdated practices such as immediate umbilical cord severance or separation of mothers and babies after birth and have made traditional practices such as skin to skin bonding between mother and infants immediately after birth now the standard of medical care. I believe such practices can co-exist with life-saving standards of care in modern medicine, particular in the early recognition of complications during pregnancy, labor or neonatal care where timely referral to advanced medical care services can prevent permanent disability or death.

I have cared for numerous infants and their *'ohana* (family) who have faced serious harm or disability due to late recognition and transfer of care after home birth in Hawai'i. A recently published study by my colleagues demonstrated that infants with hypoxic brain injury were three times more likely to have had a planned home birth in Hawai'i.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35037395/>. Our *mākuahine* (mothers) in Hawai'i have the right to decide where to give birth and with whom as their birth attendants. They have the right to seek

Reproductive Justice, defined as the human right to personal bodily autonomy and have children in a safe community. This proposed bill undermines the original bill's intent to ensure that home birth occurs as safely as possible with appropriately licensed and skilled providers and thus undermines the ability of *wāhine* (women) to seek Reproductive Justice. While there already is a provision in the original bill that exempt Native Hawaiian healing practices, this proposed bill seeks to create a new category for exemption entitled "traditional midwives", which is vaguely defined as "a person who adheres to the core competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and practices under the Hawaii Home Birth Elders Council." Such an amendment would open a path for all direct entry midwives regardless of their education/training/skills to seek this exemption and the potential for abuse and misappropriation of Native Hawaiian cultural practices already exempted in the original bill by non-Native Hawaiian or other non-indigenous persons. In fact, an examination of the core competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives does indeed reveal a requirement of knowledge and competency in the use of modern advance resuscitation techniques and equipment, further supporting the need for regulation and licensure to ensure the safest environment possible for home birth.

Rejection of SB 2661 will ensure that *wāhine* (women) who choose to have a home birth will be attended by competently skilled providers with the *'ike* (knowledge) to both embrace traditional cultural values and advanced medical interventions when needed to achieve *Mauli Oli* (optimal health balance of spiritual, physical, mental and social wellbeing).

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kara Noelani Wong Ramsey, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:48:55 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lea Minton	Individual	Comments	Yes

Comments:

Dear Senate Committee on Health,

I am providing the following comments regarding SB2661. As the law currently is written, there is an exemption for persons choosing to serve women in labor and birth who choose not to become licensed. The Hawaii State Constitution protects Native Hawaiian practices in perpetuity, and they are also noted as exempt from requirement for licensure. The amendments to SB2661 provide exemptions to non-Native Hawaiian persons practicing without education, curriculum, or oversight in place, while granting full scope practice authority. If the Legislature desires to do this, my question is, why would we leave the midwife licensure law in place? This amendment allows anyone to practice without a license which is what the Legislature, and State Auditor one two separate occasions, determined previously could not continue.

I encourage the Senate Committee on Health to consider what objective they are trying to achieve with amending HRS 457-J and review if the amendment achieves that purpose. I believe the public should be aware who the Legislature is trying to grant midwifery practice to without licensure, as it is not clearly outlined in the amendment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Le'a Minton, Certified Nurse-Midwife

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:54:05 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jess Adair	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee

Bill SB2661

Friday January 28, 2022 1pm HST

IN SUPPORT of Bill SB2661

My name is Jessica Adair and I am a mother of two, both of which were born in my home in Hawaii.

I am testifying in favor of this bill because I have been significantly impacted by my incredible midwife and her true passion and level of care and concern for birthing mothers and their families. I have seen first hand how she and her associates have gone above and beyond for the good and well being of myself and my closest friends who have also had the pleasure of working with her in this intimate and sacred way. In my opinion, it would be a tragedy if these women were limited in any way in their abilities to serve as the wonderfully do and for women to not have the option to choose their life changing level of care.

The work of traditional midwives is something that has changed me in so many ways after my experience of working with them. I am inspired to be a better mother, friend and advocate for autonomous birth practices because of their example.

Thank you so much for you time and consideration.

Jessica Adair

909.632.6772

Jessbrandler@jbrandbeauty.com

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:59:32 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sara DiGrazia	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Dear Honorable Senators,

My name is Sara DiGrazia and I am a kama'aina to Hawai'i, mother of two healthy, home-birthed children, and a licensed psychologist. I am writing to you as a woman who has been profoundly shaped as a mother and professional by my home-birth experiences. Due to the innate trust in the process of birth that my mid-wife had, I was able to walk away from birthing my children with trust and confidence in myself. This trust is not part of the Western OBGYN/nurse midwife model of birthing children. I hope that you will vote in support of this bill so that women after me can choose how they will birth and therefore have access to the experience that will shape their motherhood and life.

Thank you,

Sara DiGrazia, Psy.D.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 7:40:55 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Aoki Birthing Care	Testifying for Aoki Birthing Care	Support	No

Comments:

We believe all types of birth practitioners exist for all types of people! We need all types of birth practitioners to practice for all types of people! We support this bill!

As this bill will not impede on one's ability to incorporate or provide cultural practices. This bill will allow local birth practitioners to continue to be trained by Elder midwives who are from the community and have been practicing in our communities for over 15 years! And the great gift the bill will give the generations to come the choice to have individualized care from birth practitioners who have different cultural practices.

We encourage the legislators to support this critical bill!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:50:49 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Raquel Coaxitlali	Testifying for Community Partera	Support	No

Comments:

Traditional Midwifery is a valid and important indigenous technology , it has its own systems and protocols that have been around for thousands upon thousands of years. Traditional midwives supported the birth of all nations and they deserve respect and honor. Keeping traditional midwifery protected is vital for the preservation of keeping cultural indigenous practices and technologies alive through out the generations. A traditional Hawaiian midwife I had the honor of learning from, mentored me and supported me to connect back to my own roots, claim my power and helped me become a midwife. Without her traditional knowledge I never would have made it through my training.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:04:19 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Rachel Curnel Struempf	Testifying for Hawaii Midwifery Council	Support	No

Comments:

HAWAI'I MIDWIFERY COUNCIL

73-1001 Ahulani St, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740.

(808) 325-5333

‘A‘OHE HANA NUI KE ALU ‘IA

EST. 2015

January 27, 2022

Dear Esteemed Senator Keohokaloloe and Members of the Health Committee,

We submit this testimony in SUPPORT of SB2661. Birth in Hawaii is made safer for all, especially low income and BIPOC birthing people, by maintaining midwife diversity. Act 32 threatens to homogenize midwifery practices in our state. We at Hawai'i Midwifery Council are aware that the birthing population in our islands is widely diverse and that safety means access to an equally diverse pool of midwifery providers.

The amendment offered by SB2661 offers a way to protect midwifery diversity and therefore increase safety for mothers and babies in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Rachel Struempf and Tara Compehos

Co-Presidents, Hawai'i Midwifery Council

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:13:44 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
dawn Lyon	Testifying for HNA	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am a NICU RN of 32 years here at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. I have seen first hand,( as we recieve every single baby that is a bad outcome from home births), the devastation from delayed resusitative care. The devastation is to the baby, as wellk as the family unit emotionally, financially, and lasts the lifetime of the patient.

Unfortunately, I have also witnessed one midwifes name appear repetatively over in association with our homebirth/HIE babies. It is heartbreaking to see the families and patient suffer at the hand of this provider.

I support legislation to ensure qualified and credentialed midwifery practices.

**MICHAEL P. VICTORINO**  
Mayor

**SANANDA K. BAZ**  
Managing Director



COUNTY OF MAUI  
**COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS  
OF WOMEN**

200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793

October 12, 2021

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FROM THE MAUI COUNTY  
COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Support for Amendments to Act 32

The Maui County Committee on the Status of Women (MCCSW) stands in full support of the proposed changes to Act 32 proposed by the Hawai'i Homebirth Collective after working on the Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force. The requests laid out in the amendment are reasonable and should be supported as midwives provide an important and valuable role in our communities.

MCCSW believes that passing Act 32 into law (requiring licensure of midwives in the State of Hawai'i) was too harsh and restrictive and unreasonable for many midwives who have been practicing for years and even decades. The numerous data presented by midwives and others showed no justification for such strict regulations, in fact, when compared to hospital births, the outcomes for home births with midwives showed better results.

The proposed amendment seeks to recognize "Traditional Midwives," who are trained according to culture with experienced midwives. The amendment would also recognize "Direct-entry Midwives," to honor the paths of non-traditional and non-certified midwives who have had many years of training with mentors and with peers in addition to formal and informal training and education.

MCCSW believes in the abilities of women to give birth to their babies and we support safe, healthy options for all birthing moms. Act 32 takes away the options for women who would choose a homebirth with a Traditional or Direct-Entry Midwife.

The amendments suggested will have no impact on the already Certified Professional Midwives but would create a way to recognize the training and expertise of Traditional and Direct-Entry Midwives and take away sanctions and punishments that are unnecessary and are another way to oppress women and our reproductive rights. Women have been giving birth to babies since the beginning of time, it is unnecessary to overregulate birth without documented justification.

The Hawai'i State Legislature passed this law based on individual horror stories of bad home birth outcomes that were terrible, but not the norm. Report after report from Hawai'i and from across the country was submitted that showed home birth to be safer than hospitals and midwives didn't push their own experiences with horrible outcomes happening in hospitals because the power structure doesn't flow that way. There are new reports, especially during the pandemic, of the value of having home birth as an option.

Bill 32 as it stands disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous and all People of Color (BIPOC) who are statistically proven to have worse maternal outcomes.

Furthermore, MCCSW recognizes that the wants and needs of women living in Hawaii are diverse. It is a fact that the State of Hawai'i faces unique challenges due to its geographical makeup as an island chain as well as its isolated location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The availability of birthing options and resources already varies widely by island. For example, women on Moloka'i and Lana'i are forced to move to either O'ahu or Maui a month before their due date, at their own expense, to give birth in a hospital on another island without their support systems.

Increasing professional pathways for Traditional Midwives and Direct-Entry Midwives may have more significant benefits for BIPOC households, as data shows BIPOC populations are statistically proven to have improved maternal outcomes when working with midwives for prenatal, birth, and postpartum care. Given that 74.5% of the population of Hawai'i is non-white (2019 American Community Survey), it is critical that the women in this State have a diverse range of options that will enable safe birthing care.

This bill disproportionately affects BIPOC midwives and other birth workers because there is no midwife certification program in the State so there is a huge geographical disadvantage for midwife candidates in Hawai'i. In addition, if midwifery students are able to participate in a program on the continent, there are very few preceptors available to supervise the students locally, particularly on neighbor islands. Most of these preceptors are white, intensifying the effect on BIPOC students.

This law is part of the continuum of government overreach into women's reproductive rights. Women have a right to choose not to go to the hospital where outcomes often include a higher rate of unwanted medical interventions, cesarean operations, evacuation births and even forced sterilizations, particularly again in BIPOC women. These are the reasons more women in Hawai'i are seeking midwives and home births so they can have better control over what happens to them while they are giving birth.

Birth is a natural process and has been happening in home settings since the very beginning of time. Birth is an easy money maker for hospitals and the medical systems because it nearly always happens naturally without intervention, but can rake in the billing with each and every intervention. This is the real reason for government regulation and professionalization of a natural, human event.

The Hawai'i State Legislature did not consider the data, testimony and information provided by midwives fairly in comparison to the information provided by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

After meeting for nearly a year, the Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force submitted a diminished version of the information to the Legislature. Not included were numerous studies and data verifying the safety and positive outcomes of home birth in Hawai'i presented by the Hawai'i Homebirth Collective, as well as testimony from Cultural Practitioners and organizations from Hawai'i and from other states and countries supporting the valuable work being done by midwives.

Women should be allowed to choose how and where they have their babies without government regulations. Homebirth and midwifery must be an option, especially for BIPOC women and babies.

Cultural and Traditional Midwives as well as Direct-Entry Midwives need to be allowed a pathway to practice and ultimately be recognized as professionals and experts in their fields in the State of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,



Kate Griffiths

Chair,

Committee on the Status of Women

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 4:48:13 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Colleen Inouye	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Senator Keohokalole and Senator Baker and the Committee on Health,

"I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii. I practice at Maui Memorial Medical Center, and have provided prenatal and obstetrical care. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety and that is what SB2661 comes down to. Therefore, I OPPOSE SB2661."

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Colleen F Inouye MD MMM MS-PopH FACHE FAAPL FACOG



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 9:00:47 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Monique Leung	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii, and I practice at Kapiolani Medical Center and Queens Medical Center. I have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for several years and care about ensuring public safety for all patients. I believe licensing requirements should be mandated for any profession, especially the medical profession. All medical professionals should be held to a standard that ensures proper medical care and safety to all patients. Therefore, I oppose SB 2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 2:55:44 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Amanda Kwiatkowski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**To:**

**The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair**

**The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair**

**Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health**

**The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair**

**The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair**

**Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection**

**From: Amanda Kwiatkowski**

**Date: January 26, 2022**

**Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives**

**Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference**

**Aloha,**

**I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.**

**I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.**

**Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.**

**Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.**

**I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.**

**Mahalo for reading this testimony.**

**Sincerely,**

**Amanda Kwiatkowski**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/25/2022 7:45:22 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kelcie Rapoza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha my name is Kelcie Rapoza. I am a mother of 2 beautiful girls. My oldest is 5 years old and my youngest is 5 months old. I had two amazing pregnancies and births. My first birth I had in the hospital and the second I had in the comfort of my own home. I am writing this testimony in support of Midwives in Hawaii. For my second pregnancy I decided to trust my care with a midwife. During this pregnancy I learned so much about my body and pregnancy. During my time with my midwife she taught me the importance of ‘ai pono or healthy eating. She kept an open discussion about how my eating could affect my labor. She also taught me about how important it is to exercise whole pregnant. During my first pregnancy with a OBGYN that delivered in a hospital they never stressed the importance of healthy foods or exercise. The main reason why I support this bill is because during my labor I found strength of how amazing womens bodies are. During my labor my midwife was ther supporting me and making sure I was comfortable. I was never told to do anything I was not comfortable with. In closing without Midwifery there is no natural child birth. Women come from a long line of strong women that gave birth with the support of a midwife. They are the original "doctors" of child birth. Mahalo for your time.

To: Senate Committee on Health

"I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii and have seen patients from Waianae to Waimanalo, to East Honolulu . Senate Bill 2661 must quickly be defeated. Although written from an equal rights, non discrimination perspective, it actually provides a way to keep a marginalized community, rather from ethnicity or misinformation, from accessing appropriate healthcare, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth. Allowing non licensed self professed "professionals" to practice medicine is dangerous! Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. I OPPOSE SB 2661"

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 5:43:33 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kimberly Pecana	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Supporting our midwives support our women and families and communities

To whom it may concern;

My name is Samantha Kaiser and I am an OB/GYN resident physician in Hawaii. I am writing in **STRONG OPPOSITION of SB 2661**. I practice at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children as well as Queen's Medical Center and provide obstetric care at both hospitals. I am nearing the end of my four years of residency training in obstetrics and gynecology. During those years I have delivered over 500 babies in Honolulu. Despite that high number, I and my fellow resident physicians are not licensed to independently provide obstetric care outside of our training program. Medical training and licensure is a closely regulated and well-organized system set in place to protect patients. SB 2661 is a threat to maternal safety in Hawaii because this bill would allow unlicensed lay people to practice as birth attendants without any guarantee of training or accountability to the public. The Hawaii state government voted to protect women in 2019 by passing SB 1033 to require the licensure of birth attendants in our state. SB 1033 already exempted Native Hawaiian healers from licensure. The current bill simply serves to derail the work we have all done together to improve maternal health and safety in Hawaii. Help us protect birthing people in Hawaii and continue to require licensure for birth attendants.

Mahalo for your attention to this matter. Please vote to OPPOSE SB 2661.

Samantha Kaiser, MD  
Honolulu, HI

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 7:01:26 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Danielle Pacific	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Danielle M Pacific

Date: 1/26/2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai‘i’s families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill’s exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai‘i’s women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai‘i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women’s reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.



I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading,

Danielle M Pacific

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 7:47:50 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ronnie Texeira, MD	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am OB/GYN who has attended thousands of deliveries. And I am kanaka 'oiwi. I have tremendous respect for and I support those who practice and perpetuate kanaka maoli birth practices. The midwife licensure law does not restrict Native Hawaiian birth practices. There is specific language in the law that states that practitioners of Native Hawaiian birth practices are already exempt.

This is about public safety. We know that births attended by people who do not have basic competency to recognize complications can result in harm - whether those births occur in the hospital or out. This legislature and the state of Hawaii recognized that by making out of hospital births safer when they passed the midwife licensure law. This exemption would undermine that law. For this reason, I oppose SB 2661.

This bill seeks to creates an exemption to licensure. Licensure is the process by which the state ensures public safety by making sure those who are licensed have had their credentials reviewed, have continuing education and review of bad outcomes, and are accountable to the public.

This is NOT a bill about homebirth - it is, however, a bill about those who attend homebirths, and that we are seeking to make home births safer by ensuring the competency and accountability of those attending homebirths. The state did this with licensure; to now create an exemption to licensure would be undermining the law we just passed.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:07:08 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Emily Gambino	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Emily Gambino

Date: January 26, 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Emily Gambino

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:13:34 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Avery Olson	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

As a new doctor specializing in womens healthcare (a first year resident physician), this bill concerns me. It concerns me that individuals who have no formal licensure would be able to care for the women of our state in a time where their health is at risk. Pregnancy, while common, is not completely safe. As such, shouldn't someone who treats an unsafe condition have training?

We love our midwives, but we also love them to have the appropriate licensure and therefore, assure appropriate training. This is about keeping all of the women in Hawaii, no matter their socioeconomic status or their location, safe. Please oppose SB2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:24:05 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Brooklyn Cochrane	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Support Hawaii's birthing people! Help keep our people safe!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:34:54 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lucia Xiong	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Representative,

I am an OB/GYN resident physician in Hawaii. I practice at Kapiolani Medical Center. and Queen's Medical Center. I have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 3 years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661

All healthcare providers are responsible for ensuring they are well-educated and well-trained in their specialty. We spend years to decades preparing to care for patients because it can be a matter of life and death. We are proud that we practice evidence-based medicine and are trained to handle emergencies. Childbirth can quickly become an emergency, whether that is due to postpartum hemorrhage, a shoulder dystocia where the baby gets stuck during delivery, or non-reassuring fetal status requiring immediate delivery to prevent fetal brain injury. All practitioners willing to deliver babies must be trained and experienced in handling these medical emergencies that can have devastating consequences if not handled appropriately. Therefore, I believe that midwives need to be upheld to the same standards and responsibilities so that patients and the community are well cared for. Being a midwife is an honor and therefore, needs regulation and licensure the same as any other medical profession. While there are cultural considerations in such a sacred practice as birthing, there are ways to keep cultural traditions at the center and forefront of these momentous events. However, just as traditional midwives are the most experienced in the birthing practice among the community, all midwives today must be able to maintain the same skills so that maternal mortality and morbidity rates do not match those of the past.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate the work you do to ensure the safest conditions for all our mothers and mothers-to-be.

Lucia Xiong, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:43:06 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Emma Whitney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this incredibly important bill. It is imperative to support birthing people to choose who they want to birth with and where that is. We must allow birthkeepers to continue to learn from elders midwives. We must allow cultural practices to be upheld and continued. Birth is a matter of life and death for many, allowing choice will ensure the safety of many of them. This is a proven to be true. If you are pro life you must be pro choice in birthing options.

Mahalo,  
Emma



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:43:16 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cassandra Beaumont	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Larysa M. Joy  
Date: 26 January 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Larysa M. Joy

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:58:31 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alex Amey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill is crucial to keep the cultural practices of traditional midwives in hawaii intact. I have personally worked with and met amazing traditional midwives and have seen the healing effect they have on the community in maui. We need to acknowledge traditional midwives as competent and stop supporting the field of midwifery as exclusive to white people. Indigenous knowledge and traditional midwives have been a pillar in the community of maui and would be destroying this community to take this work away from them. As a licensed Provider myself, i believe we need to recognize ALL forms of qualifications and not discriminate against indigenous and black/brown people.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:33:32 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kelsi Chan	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kelsi Chan and I am an OBGYN resident physician in Hawaii. I stongly oppose SB 2661. Please help us to protect birthing people in Hawaii by mandating individuals be qualified and practice safely through receipt of licensure.

Mahalo, Kelsi

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:45:21 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Amber Goff	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Amber Goff and I personally have experienced the support and care from Traditional Midwifery practices here on Maui. As a woman of color, who had a very traumatizing hospital birth with my first birth, I don't know what I would have done without this incredible community of Midwives. They helped me heal on a physical and emotional level during my homebirth with my youngest son and after. As a Black mom on island it should be a choice left to the birthing person to decide who they want to birth with. Please allow these incredible woman to continue these practices that have been passed down for generations and should continue to be passed down.

Thank you.

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Naomi Rahm

Date: 1/26/22

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Naomi Rahm

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:30:31 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Wai'ala Ahn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

birth is sacred. how one chooses to birth is sacred. where someone chooses to birth is sacred. who assists, guides, facilitates and helps usher the next generation earth side is SACRED.

however one chooses to birth it should be their choice, it should be respected, supported and not decided upon by anyone else but the birthing bodies themselves and their 'ohana. traditional birthing practices/midwifery have been around since human creation - to hānau is a natural process that every human has been apart of by being born and it is something that each of us has the self sovereignty and right to choose - no one but ourselves should decide how we hānau and welcome our keiki earthside.

be it with doctors in hospitals, midwives in birthing center, with traditional midwives in the comforts of our homes or completely unassisted - as educated, informed and conscious beings/birthing bodies we have the right to decide.

Please don't let our self sovereignty and autonomy be taken away when it comes to how one births - please kōkua in Protecting Traditional Midwifery Options in Hawai'i by Supporting and advocating bill SB2661 + voicing your Support of Traditional Midwifery! So much of how we live our lives, who we are + what happens in this world as a whole connects to birth - we all need the right to choose how we birth and become 'ohana; birth is Sacred lets do all we can to keep it that way

how we hānau is our choice - as someone who birthed 13months ago with one of the few traditional midwives here in Hawai'i I wouldn't change our homebirth experience for anything; it was truly humbling, empowering + safe. throughout pregnancy, labor and the entire postpartum experience our midwife has been a beacon and an unparalleled support that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere else. she has been a blessing to our whole 'ohana in unmeasurable and life changing ways and I believe everyone deserves that. If traditional midwifery is your choice as it was ours, I believe you should have the right to have it and I will stand however I can so that all others who want it can for them, their keiki and all future.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:47:28 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Trillium Simington	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Trillium Simington

Date: January 26, 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.



Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Trillium Simington

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Sally Kaiulani Markee, MD

Date: January 26, 2022

Re: Strong Opposition for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I am an OB/GYN who has attended hundreds of deliveries, and I am kanaka 'oiwi. I have tremendous respect for and I support those who practice and perpetuate kanaka maoli birth practices. The midwife licensure law does not restrict Native Hawaiian birth practices. There is specific language in the law that states that practitioners of Native Hawaiian birth practices are already exempt. Many of the advocates for SB2661 perform more contemporary practices that are not truly Native Hawaiian practices and are in fact a misappropriation of Native Hawaiian culture. This bill will lead to misappropriation and labeling of non-Native Hawaiian practices by non-Native Hawaiian lay birthing persons.

This is about public safety. We know that births attended by people who do not have basic competency to recognize complications can result in harm - whether those births occur in the hospital or out. This legislature and the state of Hawaii recognized that by making out of hospital births safer when they passed the midwife licensure law. This exemption would undermine that law. I have seen first hand the grave consequences which can result from inexperienced, unlicensed providers attempting risky birth practices when these patients present to the hospital seeking help. For this reason, I oppose SB 2661.

Sincerely,

Sally Markee, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 11:51:11 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Andrea Martinez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I recently had a baby. During my pregnancy it was very difficult to find proper midwifery care on Maui due to the limitations. The current limitations in place restrict the amount of birth workers, subsequently resulting in the few midwives who can practice to be completely booked, overtired, and overwhelmed with women needing support. Especially during the times of Covid and any pandemic, the utilization of "all hands on deck" are needed and imperative. I would have benefited from receiving more adequate care along with many other women.

Additionally, it is important for indigenous cultures to continue their cultural practices.

Allow women to choose their birth practitioners please. It's not your body.

"We are all descendants of someone who birthed at home without a licensed midwife." - unknown

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Andrea Martinez

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:17:35 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Shandhini Raidoo	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am an obstetrician-gynecologist and I have been providing prenatal and obstetric care at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children and The Queen's Medical Center for over six years. Pregnancy care is a public safety issue and our state legislature should ensure that people who provide care to pregnant people and their families are licensed and have met safe standards of care. For this reason, I oppose SB 2661.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and safety of Hawaii's families.

Sincerely,

Shandhini Raidoo, MD, MPH

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:22:32 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**Aloha Chair Keohokalole and Committee Members,**

**I am writing to you as a retired attorney, a mother of three children, and a strong proponent of homebirth and midwifery care.**

**I strongly support the exemption of traditional and indigenous midwives from the state licensing requirements.**

**My three births at home in Hawai'i were assisted by well-trained, skilled, and extremely experienced midwives. None of them were licensed; all were trained by other traditional midwives. All three births were safe, successful, and happy occasions. It was my choice to give birth at home and I'm so grateful that there was no mandatory licensing scheme to prevent it.**

**Now it's the next generation's time for choice. Yes, this is an issue of choice, and bodily autonomy. Just as women must have the right to chose whether to bear a child, a woman must also have the right to chose how and where to give birth.**

**As you can see by the terms of the exemption, not just anyone could call themselves a 'traditional midwife'; they would have to have core competencies and be recognized by the Hawaii Homebirth Elders Council. So any concerns you might have have been addressed by this bill.**

**In closing, I urge you to exempt these amazing and skilled traditional midwives from the licensing requirement that those in the medical profession must meet. Traditional and indigenous midwifery is a very different profession.**

**Mahalo for your time.**

**#####**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:45:49 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Danielle Ordonez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

How a woman chooses to bring her baby into this world is her choice. It is her personal experience. It is her journey. Birthing a child is a natural process that's been happening since the start of human existence! Birthing a child is a sacred experience and the woman who is doing the birthing deserves the respect to choose how they will go about it!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:46:58 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lori Auldridge	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I write to you as a mother of 4--all of my babies were born on Maui--and passionate birth culture advocate. It is important to the birthing community in Hawaii (especially here on the island of Maui) that women have choices when preparing for birth and labor. One of those choices should absolutely be traditional midwives. Please represent the wants and needs of the people of Hawaii by voting to exempt traditional midwives from licensing requirements that many Hawaii residents and mothers did not ask for. Thank you.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:47:02 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this important bill to honor traditional midwives and protect homebirth moms.

This bill will recognize the Hawaii Homebirth Collective as an oversight board for Traditional midwives, and exempt them from the licensing requirement that goes into effect on July 1, 2023. By doing so, it provides a pathway for mothers to continue to choose their local traditional midwives. Without this bill, any young midwife training in Hawaii would need to get certified from a mainland school and get a CPM/CNM or naturopath license, with no option for traditional midwives to continue practicing as they have for centuries.

Please preserve a woman's choice to choose their traditionally trained midwife.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this very important bill.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 12:53:04 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Crystal-Marie Alpiche-Kanae	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Keohokalole and Health Committee

SB2661

Friday, January 28, 2022

1:00pm via Videoconference

**In Support**

My name is Crystal-Marie Alpiche-Kanae and I am in support of SB2661 that will exempt traditional midwives from the licensing requirements set to go into effect in 2023.

In late 2021 my husband and I decided that we wanted to give birth to our last and final child at home. Due to COVID restrictions and the way that this pandemic has been and will be affecting our lives, we wanted to give our daughters the opportunity to experience the birth of their baby brother, to be intimately and lovingly involved, as well as see what a strong, beautiful woman's body is capable of.

Unfortunately, my entire family caught COVID and per DOH guidelines, we were no longer able to give birth at home with the comfort of having our midwife team physically present and able to assist in the birth of our son. However, there was massive confusion in the week leading up to my son's birth. I was being told by a doctor that I would have to give birth by myself in the emergency room, I was told by a nurse that I wouldn't have to give birth in the emergency room, I was told my husband could come, I was told that he couldn't, there were so many stories that it was a very stressful time and nothing was certain or clear. In addition to this, both of my daughters were induced so I had no idea what a normal birth looked like. I didn't know how to time my contractions or when to head out to the hospital, everything was a rather grey area that I had never experienced.

And because of this, I ended up going into active labor at home. If my husband and I hadn't made the choice to have a traditional midwife team to begin with, our experience of having our son at home could have been very traumatic and traumatizing for myself, my husband, and our daughters. However, because we had a traditional midwife, we were able to videoconference

with her and she made all the difference. She helped guide myself and my husband through the birthing process so that my son was healthy and safe, never put in a compromising position that would have affected him or I. Everything that she did for us, helped lead my body to do what it was naturally designed to do without putting me or my son at risk.

On the contrary, the 911 operator wanted someone to place their hand over my opening pelvis and try to keep my son in. This would have not only placed myself in danger from trying to deny my body of what it naturally needed to do, but it could've also put my son in danger because there wouldn't have been his father to nurture and lovingly catch him as he exited my womb. If we hadn't had our traditional midwife to support us, the outcome of our story perhaps wouldn't have been as successful as it was. Every mother should have a choice in how she wants to deliver her child and the risks and benefits she's willing to have. Every mother should have a choice in how she welcomes her child into the world. And having a choice means having the choice to give birth with a traditional midwife or in a hospital. Please support SB2661 and allow mothers to have a choice.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 1:00:22 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Gigi Vargas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This testimony is in support of SB2661. It is important to protect and preserve individual womens' rights to access various types of midwives that align with their unique values, so each individual may birth in the way that best suits them. As a woman, I demand autonomy over my entire birthing experience. I am best prepared and cared for by traditional midwives whos cultural practices allow for intuitive changes, natural medicines, movement, silence, chanting, drumming, patience, space and overall sovereignty during birth. We need the traditional midwives who honor our whispers and whails. We need the traditional midwives who serve our spirits, and our bodies, over the demands of regulatory boards.

I will only ever birth in the comfort of my own space, with my trust in traditional midwives.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 1:09:25 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Rochelle Felipe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Members of the committee,

I strongly support SB2661 RELATING TO MIDWIVES.

Thank you for listening to the voice of the community. We need to support family's choices regarding their birth and make Midwifery care more accessible, equitable, and safe for all.

Please support SB2661.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Rochelle Felipe

[08rfelipe@gmail.com](mailto:08rfelipe@gmail.com)

808-728-0919

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 2:26:50 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jessica Celso	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Traditional midwifery is important to my family and I. We chose to have our 3 babies at home when we were looking for a midwife it wasn't necessary if she was certified or not. Women need the freedom of choice , we need to be able to choose who we want at our births to support us. Traditional midwives are a gift to society . These practices are sacred. Please allow these incredible women to support our communities and share their brilliant knowledge.

Thank you

Jessica Celso

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 2:54:32 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Bonnie Marsh	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a Naturopathic Doctor, I support not licensing Traditional Midwives who are properly trained. It is vital that we honor and safeguard traditional birthing practices and midwives. This gives pregnant women more choices on who will assist them during the birthing process. I practiced as a nurse midwife in California for 20 years and we had a wide range of midwives. Some were Licensed Midwives, Nurse Midwives and Traditional Midwives. All equally safe and qualified.

Please support this bill to help preserve Traditional Midwives

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:12:53 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Olivia Manayan, MD MPH	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii. I practice at Kapiolani Hospital, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for two years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:21:44 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lauren Ing	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Licensure of midwives allows for more accountability and public safety. Their credentials are reviewed and they are upheld to the same standard as other health care professionals when it comes to staying up to date on practices and being reviewed for bad outcomes. There is already a provision in the current bill for exemptions for native Hawaiian traditional practices. By further expanding definitions to allow exemptions for "traditional midwives", the structures put in place to protect the public are put at risk.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:22:17 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Theresa Myers, MD	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Theresa Myers, and I am an OB/GYN resident doctor in Honolulu. I am testify in opposition to SB 2661. SB 2661 directly undermines SB 1033, the law passed in 2019 requiring licensing of midwives. This law brought us closer to national and international standards, improved transparency for parents-to-be choosing birth providers, and strengthened maternal healthcare in Hawaii. This law also already contains an exception for traditional Native Hawaiian healers. Birth is an incredibly special but also potential dangerous event, and parents must be able to choose care providers that accurately represent their training. SB 2661 is a threat to maternal safety in Hawaii because this bill would allow unlicensed lay people to practice as birth attendants without any guarantee of training or accountability to the public.

Please help protect our families by voting to oppose this bill. Mahalo.

Theresa Myers, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:25:14 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Nancy Yang	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I fully support the practice of midwives, but they should be trained to a standard that ensures the safety of mothers and babies, who should be our priority. This bill would be counter to that priority.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:34:24 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support. Let parents make their own decisions.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:47:11 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Alexander R. K. Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

With the limitations of hospitals and potential exposure hazards to infants due to Covid-19, at home births with midwives is ideal-- especially on an island where many live in rural areas and cannot get to a hospital in a reasonable time (not to include the stressors that are added to the mother during relocation during high intensity moments closer to birth-- especially if done in it alone). Midwifery should also be reimplemented on our islands, to perpetuate a custom that was practiced on the islands long before hospitals ever arrived.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 3:55:51 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
tanya m naehu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 4:26:55 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cailin Goodier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please allow this testimony to support legislative bill SB2661. I believe individuals should have the right to choose who to support them during birth. Indigenous and culturally trained midwives have been practicing for thousands of years and I believe regulating them further colonizes birth and forces individuals to make choices they may not want to.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 5:44:18 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jason Economou	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and members,

I am writing in support of exempting traditional midwives from certain licensing requirements. Midwifery, in my opinion, is both a form of healthcare, as well as a cultural practice. I personally do not believe it is the state's place to eliminate cultural practices, or unnecessarily limit a woman's reproductive health choices. Just as the state does not disallow individuals from seeking emotional support from priests instead of psychologist, I think it is best to allow birthing mothers to choose what sort of assistance they receive as they engage in a natural process. Traditional midwifery practices have occurred throughout history and throughout cultures, and they will continue whether sanctioned by the state or not. Perhaps, if we exempt these practitioners from some licensing requirements, they may enrich the profession.

Mahalo,

Jason Economou



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 5:56:08 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Amy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Midwifery has helped me feel more confident and secure in my first pregnancy. When the radiology department at Wilcox got COVID she helped assure me everything was fine and continued to monitor the baby. Even her advising me to go to Wilcox this weekend due to dehydration, it was personal care that I couldn't find during short staffed medical clinics during this time.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 6:58:00 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jackie Brilhante	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because as a mother and worker in the birth world, I have seen the impact that Traditional midwives have had in the lives of birthing families.

The immense amount of support a traditional midwife can bring to birthing families is no comparison to what most women receive in the offices of their care providers.

With postpartum depression and disorders on the rise it's important to keep traditional midwifery highly accessible to all families because doing so allows them to be cared for in the best way possible.

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

From: Mariah Strong

Date: January 27th, 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

As a student midwife attending a MEAC (Midwifery Education Accreditation Council) accredited school I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Mariah Strong



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 7:21:25 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Mary Jane Bennett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in Support of SB 2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 7:33:40 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Chrystie Fujimoto	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii and have been in practice for 12+ years. I oppose SB 2661 - licensure is the process by which the state ensures public safety by making sure those who are licensed have had their credentials reviewed, have continuing education and are accountable to the public. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.

Sincerely,

Chrystie Fujimoto, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 7:53:25 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Marty Martins	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My support of this bill has to do with individual rights. Advocates of "reproductive rights" often rely on "a women's right to choose" when arguing for the decision to end a pregnancy before birth. If it is legal for a woman to choose to have an abortion, why shouldn't she be free to choose the midwife of her choice - especially one trained in cultural practices - regardless of whether that person has a license from the state?

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:26:39 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sheree Kuo	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a medical professional who takes care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 8:51:30 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
MJL	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a practicing obstetrician and my mother was a midwife. While most births go well, a small percentage do not, and the pregnant woman can deteriorate quickly. Those trusted with the responsibility of guiding pregnant and birthing people through this process need to be able to identify complications in a timely manner, and sometimes need to be able to quickly act. A woman experiencing postpartum hemorrhage could bleed to death in a matter of minutes if the birth attendant is not licensed and trained to perform the maneuvers or administer the medications to stop the bleeding. The US ranks last (worst) in the industrialized nations with regards to maternal mortality, especially in ethnic minority populations, so exempting "traditional midwives" from licensing and meeting the minimal requirements for training as recommended by the World Health Organization will be a disservice to the indigenous mothers whose lives we are trying to save--especially here in the State of Hawaii.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:13:12 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Juliana Koo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Increase women's accessibility to choose their own birthing options by recognizing traditional midwifery.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:14:25 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
nicole iglesias	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As a mother of two, and expecting our third, the choice to choose our birthing options for this child any any future keiki we may be blessed with is paramount to us! As the standards of hospitals are ever changing and restricting more and more our rights to choose how we birth, who we allow at our births and much more, I believe we should not be denied the kind of care we see fit for our personal situation. Mahalo for not denying moms across the island the right to choose for themselves!

Nicole Iglesias

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:21:13 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sydney Covell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am supporting SB2661. I am a mother of two daughters ages 3 and 1. I birthed both of my children in the safety and comfort of my own home with the help of my husband, my naturopathic doctor, and experienced, skilled, and unlicensed midwife. I am forever grateful to my midwife for helping me prepare mentally, physically, and spiritually for birth and motherhood. Having the ability to choose how I want to give birth and have my autonomy be respected by my midwife was life changing and empowering. It's the greatest gift I have been given to be a mother and to have given birth on my own terms. Both of my births were safe and near textbook as far as birthing goes.

I trusted my midwife and am so grateful for the beautiful experiences she helped me create. It is imperative that mothers have the right to choose who will help them birth and how they will birth. Many midwives are unlicensed and are carry more knowledge and experience than some licensed midwives . We must allow mothers the right to choose!

Please pass SB2661 to allow mothers access to the amazing gifts of all midwives and birth workers.

Mahalo nui!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:24:09 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Government has no right to restrict we the people and our sovereign right to choose how we give birth to our children. My body my choice. The Government has no authority to tell we the people what we should put in our bodies or force us into any medical care that we do not deem appropriate. Additionally they have no right to restrict humans from millenia of ancient wisdom handed down from our ancestors through our families and communities. Stay out of our lives. Stay away from our bodies. Get out of our way as we pursue life and liberty as we see fit.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:35:55 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sara Harris	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OBGYN in Hawaii. I practice at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 5 years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:44:21 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
CY	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a medical professional who cares for sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i. I have taken care of newborns who have suffered from illness, injury, and death as a result of inappropriate care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state. I have also taken care of newborns who have suffered from illness, injury, and death as a result of a delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state. I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:54:23 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Aubrey Aea	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I urge you to pass SB2661 to support and allow our traditional midwives to assist, nurture, and care for mothers who choose homebirths.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 9:55:40 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cynthia Garguilo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a mother who has birthed three healthy children, I support this bill and the rights of parents to choose to have a midwife during childbirth. Midwifery is necessary to the emotional health of the birthing process and we should all have the choice to receive the specialized support that midwives provide.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:03:35 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Oshi Simpson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

All expecting mothers should have the choice to choose how they birth their babies. A choice because of their beleifs, faith and also cultural purposes, MATTER!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:04:55 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Benjamin Callahan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha members of the 31st Hawaii State Legislature. Thank you for your time on this important matter of indigenous rights, birth rights. My name is Benjamin Callahan and I strongly support SB 2661. There are many layers to indigenous rights that have been stripped away, shackled, and suppressed by various forms of colonization and western/white supremacy across the American continent and the islands of Hawaii. Today, we discuss the fundamental and basic human right to birth the way a woman and family choose. To call a form of birth illegal in and of itself is wrong. To call those wise and honorable indigneous birthkeepers illegal is wrong. To condemn, shame and penalize those who are brave enough to bring a baby into this world in ceremony honoring ones ancestors is wrong. To call birth illegal is wrong. Let us instead decide here and now that all birth is legal in Hawaii. Especially indigneous birth of, with and for our ancestors and people who we honor each amd everytime a baby is born. We do not exist today without our ancestors. Indigenous birth is for our ancestors. Indigenous birth is not to be feared or judged by the ignorance of colonization. Indigenous birth is to be celebrated, nurtured and loved as is each and every baby's right. Let us all celebrate the miracle of birth and beauty, strength and wisdom of all our indigenous birthkeepers by approving tthis bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin Callahan

Pukalani, Maui, HI.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:05:15 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Hillary Sasaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:08:32 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Hannah Schoen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair and Senate Committee,

I would like to present testimony in support of SB2661. I am a registered nurse with background in Neuro/Trauma ICU and also Cardiac Telemetry. I made the informed choice to home birth with all of my six children. I have been privileged to have a home birth in two countries and three states (including Hawaii). I have been cared for by CNMs, CPMs and traditional midwives. Homebirth providers are essential to providing care and options for women. In my experience homebirth midwives are very particular in their assessment of a woman's ability to safely birth at home. Traditional midwives in Hawaii also add a layer of providing prenatal care to women who may not seek medical care at a hospital otherwise. Please allow Traditional midwives to continue to provide care for women in Hawaii!

Thank you,

Hannah Schoen, RN

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 10:10:14 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Meghan Leialoha Au	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I **strongly support** SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

The original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Hawaiian and other cultural practitioners, elders and community knowledge have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

Pass SB 266, exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements, and allow true sovereignty to reign in these lands.

Mahalo,

meghan leialoha kaopua au

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 11:04:53 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Joseph Glenn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

More options for homebirth is better. Traditional midwifery is an essential service.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 11:05:37 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Krystal Yasukawa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Krystal Yasukawa. I am currently licensed as a registered nurse, and in process of obtaining my naturopathic practitioner certificate. I have been fortunate this year to be pregnant, working with a traditional midwife, and learning the complimentary methods midwifery has to empower women to give birth naturally and successfully without unnecessary and invasive medical interventions. I worked on a labor & delivery unit, and since then have given birth to my three children, all with, what I realized now, were considered unnecessary and invasive. One was traumatic. Had I been educated, encouraged, and empowered by other women as I am now, I would have had completely different birth experiences. I believe that the midwifery practice can compliment the medical practices of labor and delivery in the hospital, in areas that the medical practices lack, and vice versa. I am in support of exempting midwives to be licensed and allowing them to practice, leaving the responsibility and liability in the sole discretion of the birth-woman's choice. Thank you.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/26/2022 11:08:14 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Melissa Iwamoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2661. We should value Indigenous/traditional knowledge and practices, including for maternal health, prenatal care, birth, and postpartum care, and give it the respect it deserves. This bill seems to do just that. Mahalo nui loa.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 2:48:26 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
RT	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a medical professional who takes care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 3:25:04 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
AM	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a nurse who takes care of critically ill babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i. I have cared for newborns who have suffered from mismanagement/delay in care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state. The parents trust these people and end up paying for it the rest of their lives when their baby ends up as special needs or losing their life due to irreversible damage.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want to or qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 3:51:05 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jess Fernandez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill is HUMAN RIGHTS. This bill gives traditional midwives rights to practice traditional midwifery in THEIR lands- in their traditions, these are sacred and crucial. **WOMEN SHOULD HAVE A CHOICE !!!** And there are currently minimal options for women in Maui. Cultural practices need to be upheld and continued. This care is far more meaningful, intentional, and personalized. Individual care needs to be an option for women.

Please don't take away our sacred, and SAFE practices. Traditional midwifery includes extensive training - and no one in the sacred birth community takes any of it lightly. It means everything to us- stop trying to take away the few rights we still have.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 4:43:15 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Catherine Kessler	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

As a woman, I believe in a woman's right to choose. Some women choose to birth their baby's in hospitals, some choose to birth their baby's in birthing centers, and some, like me, choose to birth their baby's at home with a traditional midwife. I chose my traditional midwife, Ki'i Kahooahanohano early in pregnancy and she and her partner, Kiana Rowley, nurtured me mind, body, and soul on my journey to motherhood.

Ki'i and Kiana's care starkly contrasted to the hurried and distracted care I received from the Kaiser doctors who Ki'i advised I continue seeing for labs. The Kaiser doctors spent minimal time discussing nutrition, lifestyle adjustments, mental health, and questions about pregnancy. My appointments usually lasted 5 minutes and routinely consisted of the doctor scaring me about potential worst outcomes, a highly unhealthy way to treat a pregnant woman. My meetings with Ki'i and Kiana were personal. They often lasted 2-3 hours and there was space for me and my husband to ask all our questions. Ki'i explained the tests the doctors were going to run so I was educated and unafraid. We discussed diet, exercise, and sleep in great detail. She also made herself available for my emotions- anyone who has journeyed to parenthood knows there is so much more than blood work that must be cared for along the way. Ki'i and Kiana cared holistically. When it came time to birth my baby I felt confident and prepared, in large part because of their care.

My daughter's birth, attended by Ki'i and one of her apprentices, at home was smooth and beautiful. I was calm and focused throughout. Ki'i gave me the space to follow my intuition so that labor was as easeful and comfortable as possible. At the same time she monitored the whole process, checked my vitals, kept me hydrated, and assured me that I could bring my baby into this world. I felt safe, I was safe, and that made labor a marvelous dance rather than a painful experience. When my baby was born, Ki'i placed her in my arms and my heart filled with unfathomable love and gratitude.

Though my daughter is 2 months old now, Ki'i continues to care for our ohana. Her postnatal visits have helped make my postpartum journey, like my pregnancy and birth, graceful. As a new mother I have many questions and Ki'i is always there when I ask. She has counseled me and my husband and we are indebted to her. Not only has my family grown with the addition of our daughter, it has grown with the addition of an aunty.

My birth was beautiful beyond comparison. Because of the counseling and care I received during my pregnancy and birth from my traditional midwife, I feel strong as a mother. I trust my instincts and myself. When I hear the birth stories of many friends I do not hear the same sentiment about their experience. Too many of my friends have been traumatized in their births and have had a rough postpartum adjustment. It makes me sad. Every woman has the right to an intuitive, empowering, and beautiful birth. There is certainly a place for medicine and I'm grateful that we have modern technology when we need it, but there is also a place for traditional midwifery. Every woman has the right to choose. I trust that the State of Hawai'i will continue to allow women to decide what model of care is best for them and their families.

Aloha

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 5:51:28 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Bliss Kaneshiro	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 6:11:55 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
GIANNY N NAVAS	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to you to express my support of SB2661, to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements. My name is Gianni Navas, and as a woman, doula, student midwife, and aspiring mother, I wouldn't want to be served during my pregnancy, birth, and postpartum by any midwife other than one of the traditional midwives on the island. If I don't have the chance to have a traditional midwife to attend me at my birth, my options would be limited. There are many women who want a home birth with a midwife who holds traditional knowledge and techniques to carry out a safe labor and birth. I want limited medical interventions, to be in my home where I feel safe, and with someone assisting me in a way that also guided the women in my family in the past, before hospitals, nurse midwives, or licenses. This is a choice I feel comfortable and safe with, and would be the opposite in a hospital. I would also not feel comfortable having a homebirth with a nurse midwife, or one who was more medical minded and didn't share any cultural birth knowledge the way traditional midwives do. At the end of the day, a licensed provider does not make me feel safe. I would rather have a traditional midwife who has been practicing for 10 years, over a new licensed midwife practicing for 3-5 years. Midwifery is not neurosurgery, psychiatry, or any other typical medical field. It is women serving laboring women, and has been around since the beginning.

It is disappointing, and quite appalling that Act 32 has been implemented. An act that completely disregards all the traditional midwives in the past who have served mother's and their babies without a license. An act that is only adding more regulation, and control to a practice that has been around since the literal beginning of mankind and did not need a license or college degree. An act that will only limit women's choices in who they include in their birth, forcing them to hire a midwife who does not support or understand their culture, religion, or values especially regarding birth. This act will reduce the amount of midwives available for mother's on the island to choose who they are comfortable with. Mother's who's aunts, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, nieces, and other family members have used these traditional midwives, will no longer be able to have them serve their birth. At least a dozen midwives will be outlawed if this bill doesn't pass.

Midwifery, and especially traditional midwifery, is not just about medicine, but about the cultural, and religious aspects of care along with safe homebirth midwifery care. Traditional midwives feel obligated, and accountable to their community, and to serve the mothers who pick them as their midwives. It is a mother's decision to choose what kind of birth she wants, and who she wants attending it and serving her; one of the most important, if not the most, person



involving her birth is her traditional midwife. The traditional midwife understands the mother's needs, practices shared-decision making and informed consent, holds the birthing space, learns and practices with traditional, unique knowledge of birth, and helps guide the mother through her birthing experience in whichever way she needs. These are ways that only a traditional midwife can encourage, and a reason why women should have the choice to have a traditional midwife. As a friend of mine says "We are all descendants of someone who birthed at home without a licensed midwife."

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony, and for this opportunity for us to fight to exempt traditional midwives from licensure. This is the chance for you to rectify the issue that was originally created, and we appreciate you greatly for listening. I support SB2661.

Gianny Navas

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 6:49:31 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lea Lacar	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am writing in OPPOSITION of SB 2661. I am in the first year of residency training in obstetrics and gynecology and practice at Kapiolani Medical Center and Queen's Medical Center. I also had the privilege of growing up in Hawai'i and receiving my medical training here. As a learner, we get to interact with certified trained midwives and are able to learn from them. However we must prioritize the safety of labor and delivery, especially when care is delivered outside of the hospital safety net. As physicians and healthcare personnel, we are required to undergo rigorous education, training and licensing certification to provide care in the safest manner for our patients. Multiple risks to the mother's health and life are present during and after birth including but not limited to excessive bleeding, infection, risk for crises due to high blood pressure, and more. Therefore, trained personnel who can manage such conditions, take responsibility, and know when to escalate care are vital. SB 2661 is a threat to maternal safety in Hawaii because this bill would allow unlicensed personnel to manage births and attend to patients without guaranteed liability. The current bill is a threat to maternal health and safety in Hawaii. It's important we maintain policy that helps us protect birthing people in Hawaii by continuing to require appropriate licensure for birth attendants. Mahalo for your time.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 7:00:16 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lynn Iwamoto	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a medical professional who takes care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delays in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure meant to protect newborn infants and their families in this state.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 7:38:44 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Laine Hamamura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Bill support

Aloha,

My name is Laine Hamamura and I am a voting resident of Oahu in the city of Honolulu. I strongly SUPPORT SB2661. My testimony for supporting this bill is that I had traditional midwives at my children's births, at Kapiolani hospital and at home, and it was a crucial support for my husband and I in our beautiful birthing experiences.

My first born, was at Kapiolani hospital, and we chose to have doulas who were being trained by traditional midwives and an OBGyn at our son's birth. Being that this was my first time giving birth, I felt so nervous. However, having birth workers that I had developed relationship with and who were knowledgeable about birthing options, changed my nervousness to feeling supported and empowered. I have many friends and family who come to me asking about my birth experiences because I have had the support of birth workers.

My second, third, and fourth sons were all planned home births. These births were beautiful and harmonious as I labored and birthed my babies with confidence in what my body was doing and complete trust in my birth team.

Traditional midwives are essential to supporting the mother and father. Let's pass this bill so Traditional midwives are able to continue passing on their wisdom and offer the much needed support to families who are birthing the next generation.

Mahalo for your consideration and service to the people of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Laine Hamamura

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:15:34 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
LC	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Hawaii State Legislature,

I am a licensed medical professional practicing in the Hawaii State. I take care of sick newborns everyday. In my practice, I have seen first-hand the injuries to newborns caused by unlicensed birth attendants. Many of these injuries are life-long and they are preventable.

I OPPOSE any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants that do not qualify for licensure in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

A concerned physician

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:19:55 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Deirdre Madrid	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Everyone is free to choose their birth provider.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:27:27 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Charles D Dobbs	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Any encroachment on the physical autonomy of a birthing person is oppressive and incomprehensible in an 'evolved' society. This reality is obfuscated by the precursory form this encroachment typically takes in American maternal care, namely the eradication of non-allopathic expertise.

I support this bill because it endeavors to mitigate the harm caused by colonial arrogance, and halt the decay of white supremacy, to the benefit of future generations.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:45:05 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jenessa Adams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My family has been blessed by the wisdom and gifts of traditional midwives. My two you gest were born at home under the care of midwives and they were strong, healthy babies. We did not have a good experience in the hospital with my first baby. I believe that wisdom, passed down from experienced and expert midwives is a traditional practice that should be protected and available for families who choose this route. No mother should be forced to birth in a way that is not safe for her.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:05:18 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Joanna Garcia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB2661. I recently had a home birth with a traditional midwife in February of 2021. With the pandemic and high risk of infection with covid I took advantage of the traditional midwifery option available to me. As a native Hawaiian I was thrilled that my traditions were respected and honored and I was able to carry on the native customs that are specific to my culture. I believe that we should **preserve traditional midwifery by traditional midwives in Hawaii.**

I humbly ask that you stand in support with me of SB2661.

Mahalo,

Joanna Ho'omailani Garcia

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:11:49 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
ann chang	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii. I practice at Kapiolani hospital, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 17 years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:22:26 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
KSL	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a physician who takes care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i. As a pediatrician, I am an advocate of children who have no voice, regardless of their age, sex, gender, ethnicity, or race.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state. If families would like a home delivery, it is their choice but it should not be at the expense of the infant. Not every pregnancy is a candidate for a home birth and families should be recommended that they deliver in the hospital if the safety of mother and infant is in question. Even "good" candidates for home deliveries can have unexpected and devastating outcomes. I strongly feel that families should be aware of complications of having a home delivery.

Parents depend on the knowledge of their medical providers to give them that information. Medical providers have received rigorous schooling and training, in addition to being certified for their job. My scope of practice as a pediatrician is to care for children. It would be considered malpractice if I performed neurosurgery on a patient. That is because we are held accountable for the type and quality of medical care provided for our patients. What we want is for the birth attendants to be licensed and potentially carry malpractice insurance, like all medical providers do. We want parents to have an option for recourse should there be a death. What we want is a standard to provide basic care for the mother and infant. We want them to have the training to recognize when something is out of the scope of their practice and refer their patients to be seen by another provider. Licensure can help standardize the minimum requirements to practice.

I believe it is the choice of parents to have a licensed or unlicensed birth attendant at the delivery. Parents should not have the concern for CWS involvement based on their choice because many parents respond appropriately by bringing in their baby for further evaluation and treatment.

Families should have the choice between a licensed and unlicensed practitioner. I am under the impression that Native Hawaiian practitioners are already exempt under the current midwife licensure law. Ultimately, I want families to know the risks and benefits of a home delivery and I want them to know whether or not their birth attendants are licensed.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i. Thank you for your time.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:23:52 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cory Wittig	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I am a medical professional who takes care of babies in the newborn intensive care unit in Hawaii.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawaii.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:47:41 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
tiana lolotai	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Talofa lava,

As a Polynesian woman native to this island. I OPPOSE this bill. As everyone say "it's my body my choice" so to tell a woman WHO she is allowed to go and seek medical attention from is out of this world!! Midwives have been around seen the beginning of time. So why deem it as something forbidden now. As a mother who had a homebirth along side my amazing midwives It saddens my heart to think I could not do that again. Please do the right thing and kill this bill.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:48:11 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Adrianna DeMello	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Adrianna and I am a proud Native Hawaiian mama of two beautiful children. I am in full support of the wonderful midwives in our beautiful state because they provide a service that goes above and beyond when it comes to taking care of a woman's most precious time in their life, pregnancy and giving birth. Not only do they provide superb medical treatment, but they are also there for their patients mentally and emotionally, which is something not all medical providers can or are willing to give. Please protect our Hawaii midwives, please protect our families and our mothers.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:52:38 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
MacKenzie Chang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha members of the Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Committee,

Aloha Senator Keohokalole, Senator Baker and committee members,

My name is MacKenzie (Mackie) Chang and I fully support SB2661. All three of my pregnancies, labors, deliveries and postpartum care were assisted through Birth Believers. The Birth Believers' team consist of traditional Midwives and Doulas that were crucial to me having a smooth transition into motherhood. With their help, I've been able to have three unmedicated home births in a birthing tub. I also had the honor of having a Midwife and a Doula that have known me most of my life which made the experience even more special. The amount of support and knowledge that was given to me through my birthing team was priceless. Birth is such an empowering, life changing and significant moment. Feeling safe and comfortable in an environment that you are also the most vulnerable, is so incredibly powerful and so important during a birth. Thankfully, I have been able to experience that three different times. My wish is that every birthing person, including my own children, will be able to have that experience that as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my voice,

MacKenzie Chang



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:53:16 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Piper Lovemore	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Distinguished Senators,

I submit testimony today, motivated by the opportunity to marvel 'aloud' at the necessity of this statement; to amplify the contradiction of an entity purporting to protect a population by choosing to eliminate access to competent care.

Are we still entertaining the folly, the fallacious notion that this government intervention is at all at the behest of birthing families? Are we prepared to concede that this legislation is designed to empower institutional authority rather than protect informed consumers?

To align with the notion that a political arm, disproportionately lacking in female reproductive capability, has any relevant authority over the choices of parturient people is to perpetuate white supremacist patriarchal ideology. Period.

This bill represents an opportunity to correct this misstep, therefore, I am in support.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:01:16 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
SP	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a medical professional who takes care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i for nearly 20 years.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I **oppose** any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.

Dear Senator Jarrett Keohokalole,

I oppose bill SB2661 as it seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawaii.

I am a neonatologist who takes care of sick babies in a neonatal intensive care unit in Hawaii. In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

The preservation of indigenous birth practices should be supported, as it recognizes the unique social, economic, and health needs and circumstances of Native Hawaiians. As has been noted previously by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, as early as 1865, Kamehameha V began issuing licenses to Hawaiian kahuna. It is our responsibility as part of the medical community to ensure that health professionals have the appropriate level of training and credentialing. I would like to point out that Native Hawaiian birth practitioners are already exempt under the current midwife licensure law signed in 2019 under section 457J-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Based on my experiences as a licensed medical doctor for over 17 years, I believe the safest place for delivery is in the hospital setting. I agree with the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Heart Association that each delivery should be attended by 2 individuals, at least 1 of whom is primarily responsible for the care of the newborn infant and has the appropriate training, skills, and equipment to perform a full resuscitation of the infant in accordance with the principles of the Neonatal Resuscitation Program. I believe that all newborn infants should be evaluated by a health care professional who is knowledgeable and experienced in pediatrics within 24 hours of birth, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

That being said, I understand that there will be mothers in Hawaii that will choose home birth as an option. A study recently published in the Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health demonstrated that neonates in Hawaii with hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy (lack of adequate oxygen or blood flow to the brain) were 3 times more likely to have been a planned home birth compared with neonates without hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy (Buchanan et al, 2022). I am happy for the families that have had a successful home birth resulting in a healthy baby. However, I have personally treated babies born at home in Hawaii for life threatening conditions including hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy, seizures, heart arrhythmias, and bacterial infection. I have seen babies die after home birth due to delays in seeking hospital care. It is these babies that I think of in forming my opinion on the need for home birth patient safety measures, as all of these poor outcomes were likely preventable.

The choice Hawaii's mothers should have to make is between delivering safely in a hospital or safely at home. The current midwife licensure law has helped make Hawaii a safer place to have a baby in requiring that midwives must have a certain amount of training and demonstrated competency. Hawaii's mothers should be confident that their providers offering home birth have the proper training and experience to recognize high-risk situations. Bill SB2661 is seeking to undermine that, and for that reason, I oppose it.

Thank you for your efforts to keep Hawaii's mothers and keiki safe and healthy.

Sincerely, Tiong Han Tjoeng, MD, MPH

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:29:59 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
MD	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a medical professional who takes care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:32:56 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
kachina woolger	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support midwives the right to practice traditionally

sincerely

kachina woolger

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:33:43 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Shelbe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Members of this legislature,

I submit that Midwives have served me well and are my preferred service in childbirth, prenatal and postnatal care. I have had a wonderful experience through their expertise and believe they should be able to continue their services in freedom without inhibitions. They are so needed. Please don't take away another choice.

Thank you.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:44:23 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Emma Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support SB2661. My name is Emma Davis and I am currently pregnant with my first child. I am testifying in favor of SB661. I support this measure because I fully believe that women and families should have the right to choose to have home births with midwives for many years to come.

I personally am very excited to welcome my first child in my home surrounded by my loved ones with the personal and professional care of my midwife. I feel much more comfortable with a midwife than in a hospital. My personal beliefs are that birth is a natural, beautiful thing, and I wouldn't be able to feel as comfortable or cared for in hospital setting. My midwife has been practicing for 20 years and before that worked in the hospital as a nurse for 20 years. I fully believe that she is fully capable and qualified to assist with my birth.

To conclude, I fully support measure SB2661 and feel it is very important for all birth practitioners to be able to practice for many years to come.

Thank you, Emma Davis.

808-369-5266 elclemon@yahoo.com

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:47:57 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Julia Hemi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I'm in support of Bill SB2661 to protect the practice of traditional midwifery. It is imperative to protect the rights of all women to have freedom of choice in their own birth experience and choice in the care providers they wish to have. To honor indigenous practices, knowledge and communities. To respect diversity in midwifery and birth autonomy.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:52:29 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ruth Mor-Hamoy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support traditional midwifery

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:53:41 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Keani Kannady	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I highly do not agree with the attempt to take away any of my medical choices and being able to do birth and pregnancy the way you want to do it and everyone should have the choice. I am in full support of midwives!

Keani Tom

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:59:43 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
sarah	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill. Regulating midwives is historically racist. By licensing midwives and inadvertently making traditional practitioners illegal, the community is made to suffer. When people are not able to access culturally competent health care, their health suffers. Please pass this bill and set the boundary that we will no longer be complacent in the erasure of indigenous wisdom.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:01:12 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
rachel byrd	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in favor of SB2661. Traditional midwives must continue serving the community of Hawaii. This protects indigenous rights, women's rights and birth rights.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:07:11 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Dylan Gentaro Fujitani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:10:49 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Marit Pearlman Shapiro	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii. I practice at Queens Medical Center and Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 6 years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:32:20 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Laurie West	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support medical freedom and the right to informed consent.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:47:45 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Merciful Ananda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a Naturopathic Physician practicing in Oahu. I completed midwifery training at my university and through apprenticeship with traditional midwives. We have more families than ever coming to us who want to birth out of the hospital due to covid. Their reasons include concern about exposure to themselves and their infant to any sickness in the hospital, opting out of wearing a mask when breathing heavily during labor and delivery, and wanting to make sure their support team can be present rather than just one person as is the rule in most hospitals now. Now, more than ever, we need to support our traditional midwives to be able to practice midwifery so they can assist families and mothers to give birth safely out of the hospital. Otherwise they will continue to do births under the radar, or families will choose to birth their babies unassisted, neither of which is safe. We need to strengthen partnerships instead of creating further divide. Some of our traditional midwife elders have been practicing for over 30 years and have over 3000 births under their belts. They bring experience and tradition, and we must lift them up to continue to be the mentors for the birth attendants in apprenticeship with them.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:53:41 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Tatiana Maumausolo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Women have the right to full bodily autonomy during their birthing experience. We all have and hold different philosophies of childbirth, this bill will help to continue to give women another option for childbirth.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:53:56 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
jamin hiebert	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB2661. Less than four months ago we had our first child via home birth. In the midst of a pandemic the option to have our child at home, not adding risk to mother or child, nor overburdening the health care system was essential to the overall mental and physical health of all involved. More than physical or mental health the traditional and spiritual benefits are beyond description. As a native Hawaiian we valued the opportunity to bring our child into the world in the way of our ancestors. As a state we should help and encourage this freedom of choice through traditional midwifery. This is why I ask that SB2661 be passed into law.

sincerely,

jamin hiebert

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:55:31 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Rachel L. Curnel Struempf DEM	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Gentle Beginnings Midwifery

Rachel L. Curnel Struempf LM, CPM, CBE, LS

P.O. Box 456, Holualoa, HI 96725

(808) 990-8025

January 27, 2022

Esteemed Senator Keohokaloloe and Members of the Health Committee,

I am the first midwife licensed by the State Hawaii under Act 32, President of Hawai'i Midwifery Council, a member of the Hawai'i State Homebirth Task Force, and a member of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective. From my work in these arenas as well as my decades of experience serving a rural population on Hawai'i Island, I have come to understand the importance of medical freedom and choice in creating safety for birthing people.

Act 32 reduces access to skilled, culturally competent midwives, especially for low income and BIPOC people, by mandating one specific type of training which is based upon a white supremacist cultural perspective.

Exempting traditional midwives from licensure will increase access and safety for birthing people in our state and this I strongly support this bill.

Sincerely,

Rache L. Struempf LM, CPM, CBE, LS

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:55:49 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Michele Yamada Pangilinan	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha, I am an OB/GYN and addiction medicine specialist on Oahu. I practice at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, and at many Federally Qualified Health Centers on Oahu, where I provide prenatal and obstetric care for 12 years. I support the current law where midwives are certified to ensure safety for mothers and babies. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.

Mahalo,

Michele Pangilinan, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 11:59:23 AM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ghia Borges	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB2661 to allow traditional midwives to continue serving the community of Hawai'i. I am a mother of 2 and both of my babies were born at home, under the care and support of a traditional midwife. I urge the importance of birthing people having options and the right to choose their care providers, therefore, I am in strong support of SB2661.

Mahalo,

Ghia Borges

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:09:29 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Harmoni Akao	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:09:59 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Audrey Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Audrey Alvarez and I am a mother of three children ages 12 years, 10 years and 5 years old. All three of my children were safely and peacefully born at home under the care of highly skilled, wise and supportive women - my **traditional** midwife + doula team.

My midwife was a traditional midwife for over 40 years... She helped bring forth thousands of babies safely into this world. She was a wealth of knowledge on birth and a fierce protector of women's rights. Her life's work has been centered around women and birth. I always felt safe and secure in her care.

I am submitting this testimony as someone who strongly believes in protecting birth sovereignty, bodily autonomy and our traditional midwives and their practices.

Whether a woman chooses a hospital or home birth, it should be just that - HER choice. It is our divine right to choose where, how and with whom we birth.

**I strongly support SB2661** exempting traditional midwives from licensing requirements.

Mahalo,  
Audrey Alvarez

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:12:07 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ben Kinsey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the right of families to choose to use the services of a traditional midwife. Traditional midwives are a vital part of spiritual and aboriginal culture. Birth always has some risks. Some families are ok with more risk as part of their own cultural practice, and that's ok. Traditional midwives should be allowed to be compensated and to use the word "midwife" to describe themselves. "Midwife" does not imply a medical orientation or medical qualifications or being overseen by a medical doctor. Medically oriented midwives have their place for some families, but should not be allowed to monopolize midwifery practice in Hawai'i and supplant our precious traditional midwives. It should be legal for ALL different kinds of midwives to practice. Families deserve a choice.



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:13:39 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Beckley Dye	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB 2661. Please vote YES. Mahalo!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:16:57 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Robert Dye	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB2661!

This bill will allow all women choice who in attends their birth. Hawaii has a rich heritage, including birth, that should be honored and perpetuated.

Vote YES on SB2661

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:21:21 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cheryl Leialoha	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am currently a practicing OB/GYN in Honolulu. I practice at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children Hospital, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 24 years. Our government is responsible with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to.

Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.

Mahalo,

Cheryl Leialoha MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:22:27 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Chely Nazario	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing this testimonial on behalf of myself and my family in support of SB2661. My family and I fully support this bill as we have recently introduced our son earth side With the help of our traditional midwife Jayme Lewis. I have yet to speak with someone as knowledgeable and caring as Jamie . I had a breech homebirth in july 2021. if it hadn't been for Jamie and my doula I would have been subjected to a traumatizing cesarean section. I owe jayme my life. Please allow people like Jamie to continue practicing without subjecting them to unnecessary stress and complications to prove what they already know and love.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am opposed to Birth Attendant Bill SB2661.

I am a neonatologist, a pediatrician physician who specializes in the care of sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i. In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury as a result of delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I want to also just share a study that was just published in the Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health that analyzed data from the NICU at Kapi'olani Medical Center available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35037395/>. It reviewed Hawaii statewide birth data, looking at admissions for hypoxic brain injury and found that neonates with hypoxic brain injury were 3 times more likely to have been planned home births than normal neonates. I am not strongly against home births as they are necessary and quite accepted in many cultures, but they should be done as safely as possible. The data in the paper shows that we need to do what we can to make home births safer.

The present midwife licensure law went a long way in at least saying that those who call themselves midwives must have a certain amount of training and demonstrated competency. The argument used for the proposed Birth Attendant Bill SB2661 is the importance of preserving indigenous birth practices. Preserving indigenous birth practices is vital in this state. However, Native Hawaiian birth practitioners are already exempt under the current midwife licensure law. This proposed bill appears to try to expand the definition of traditional practitioner. The definition of "traditional midwife" on this proposed bill is quite vague and lends itself to misuse and abuse of this terminology by non-Native Hawaiian practitioners who wish to practice without oversight – regardless of the danger it poses to the families and babies in our state and the misrepresentation of our very important Native Hawaiian practitioners who are already exempted from this oversight by law.

I oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not wish to make the necessary efforts to qualify for licensure in Hawai'i to improve the safety of home births. It is selfish and unfair to the families and babies in our state.

Charles R. Neal, MD, PhD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:26:14 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Venkataraman Balaraman	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Without minimizing the role of traditional care givers, from a patient safety perspective it would be appropriate to have an expectation of collaboration with providers who can support the traditional care giver in the situation of a complication. Without these safeguards, it would be anticipated that there is a higher chance of complications not being referred in a timely manner for higher level of care from the perspective of patient safety.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:27:57 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Xi'an Vibar-Kline	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support bill SB2661 to allow midwives to continue practice in Hawaii. It is essential for the freedom of the mother's to choose their birth process. Midwives have long been valuable for their knowledge and wisdom about birth. They are a positive part of the wellbeing of mother and child.

Thank you for your consideration.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:33:26 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
kawailehua pakjake	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill and traditional midwives in the state of Hawaii. Without them, women will be limited in their healthcare choices during and after pregnancy/birth.

thank you in seeing this bill passed.

mahalo,

Kawailehua Pakjake



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:33:38 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kekapala Dye	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:34:57 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Amy Marie Long	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support this bill and any bill supporting women and having access to midwives! I've experienced first hand the important role midwives play and I couldn't imagine a world that would keep that amazing skill from mothers and their babies. Please support our women by supporting this bill!

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:51:11 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lisa Martin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB2661, a bill that exempts Traditional Midwives from midwifery licensing requirements and protects the practice of traditional midwifery. As a mother who has had 3 safe, beautiful home births, I believe it is imperative to protect a mother's choice to the type of care and birth experience she wishes to have and the ability to choose a midwife that will honor those choices. This bill will allow for the majority of birth practitioners to practice legally, allow local birth practitioners to learn from Elder midwives who have been serving our community for many, many years, and give current and future generations the choice to have individualized care from birth practitioners that provide, honor, and incorporate the various cultural practices of our diverse community.

Traditional Midwives have existed in every culture and community around the world for countless millennia; they honor generational wisdom, a woman-centered approach, holistic and alternative medicine, and so much more. There are Traditional Native Hawaiian and Elder Midwives throughout the state of Hawaii that utilize cultural knowledge, skills, and practices to care for their community in a way that honors both mother and child through an indigenous and ancestral understanding.

Bill SB2661 will protect Midwifery diversity, birth autonomy, women's rights, human rights, and the birth rights of all mothers, as well as decolonizing midwifery. Criminalizing traditional midwives puts women at higher risk and disempowers our community as a whole. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies that aim to colonize and penalize peoples that choose to honor their heritage. This bill will help to protect traditional and Indigenous practices that are vanishing globally, as it is critical to preserve this ancestral wisdom and knowledge for future generations.

This bill will also recognize the Hawaii Homebirth Collective as an oversight board for Traditional Midwives, and exempt them from the licensing requirement that goes into effect on July 1, 2023. By doing so, it provides a pathway for mothers to continue to choose their preferred local traditional midwives. Without this bill, any midwife training in Hawaii would need to get certified from a mainland school and get a CPM/CNM or naturopath license, with no option for traditional midwives to continue practicing as they have for centuries.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so. Continuing to

regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt Traditional Midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:51:32 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
krea branco	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Krea Branco. My little family and I have had the blessing to be able to birth at home. We have been held by the hands of two amazing traditional midwives, Kiana Rowley and Kii Kahooohanohano, both of Maui.

From the first prenatal session to weeks after postpartum visits, these traditional midwives showed us the meaning and value of community, of love and how gentle the birthing and after birth process can be.

I believe we all deserve options. Pregnant people are no exception. Freedom to choose if you'd like to birth at home or in a hospital.

I am in support of SB2661. To support traditional midwives. This is their lives work. It is very much needed and will continue to be needed for years to come.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:54:42 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
celia e dominguez md facog	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a double board certified reproductive endocrinologist and infertility expert and Obgyn I support SB2661. My daughter recently had a successful and splendid home delivery of a breach baby at home in lanikai ! And this was an amazing experience ! Experienced midwives are not common in Hawai'i and they should be encouraged to stay and practice with ease.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:55:45 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Daniel Anthony	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e na kanaka kanawai,

O au he makua kane o eono ka'u mau keiki.

I am a father of six children who have benefited both from the care of doctors and traditional midwives and I strongly support the guidelines set forth in this legislation that will continue to allow traditional midwives to practice in our communities.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 12:58:25 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
lizel zeager	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I Am thrilled to SUPPORT this bill because I care about the preservation of Traditional Homebirth Midwives. It would be a great disservice to Hawaii and our Hawaiian culture to eliminate traditional midwives from helping and supporting our birthing families.

I SUPPORT the freedom of mothers and families to incorporate participate in cultural practices that include birthing at home with the midwives of their choice.

I SUPPORT allowing local birth practitioners to continue to be trained by Elder midwives who are from the community and have been practicing in our communities for over 15 years.

I SUPPORT giving generations to come the choice to have individualized care from birth practitioners who have different cultural practices. I also believe that the Hawaiian culture needs to be preserved, exercised, and passed on and traditional midwives in this state absolutely do this and they also respect the personal traditions, requests, and preferences of the mother to help make birthing peaceful, respectful, and beautiful!

I SUPPORT THIS BILL. Thank you! Lizel Zeager



Melissa W. Chong, My family is from the Eastern Band of Cherokee, my children are Native Hawaiian, I am a Midwife Licensed in the state of Hawaii, I attended a "Traditional Midwifery" MEAC approved program. I seamlessly weave my familial cultural and traditional practices with the latest clinically safe practices available.

Thank you for being here today and hearing my 'Comments Only' testimony. I am not against Traditional Midwifery practices, nor do I think that alone is unsafe or considered less than. I do however think every profession should adhere to the highest standards and continue to strive for best care. I believe that best care is a blend of culturally matched care, and clinically based knowledge and resources.

This bill raises many questions. Questions of accountability, skills attainment and clinical application.

I know that the Native Hawaiian Community is protected and will continue to forge their way towards sustaining, revitalization and growth of traditional midwifery practices. This is already protected federally and named in the previous Act32. So if we are not talking about Native Hawaiian Practices I respectfully ask what indigenous midwifery model are we talking about? Yes, there are several different cultures represented here, my own included, but I would like to ask who is the cultural representative/practitioner of these other traditional practices and how can we best support them?

Stated in Bill 2661 is a change to the definition of a "Traditional midwife" means a person who adheres to the core competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and practices under the Hawaii Home Birth Elders Council." I am very familiar with the NACM's work and the 9 core competencies.

"Core Competences of Indigenous Midwives Include: Contribute to the revival and growth of Indigenous knowledge, Awareness of Indigenous worldviews and realities, Honour the relationship with the land and water, Reduce birth evacuations, Education and mentorship for Indigenous Midwifery students, Acknowledge Spirit, Support rites of passage, including pregnancy rites, birth rites, parenting rites, Honor and respect Indigeneity, Facilitate Indigenous cultural practices for labour and birth, Increase culturally based food security, Distinct ability to contribute to the healing of families and communities and Acknowledge the Newborn."

The program that houses such a tall order of education and professional privileges also very specifically states this care model is, "Essential, clinically excellent, culturally rooted, primary health care BY Indigenous health professionals FOR Indigenous families and communities."

[https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NACM\\_Banner\\_Infographic.pdf](https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NACM_Banner_Infographic.pdf)

Their program also has collaborative sharing of clinical knowledge and rotation in clinical sites with licensed providers including CNMs, CPMs, OB's etc... clinicals lasting 3-4 years with core competency evaluations.

Who is entrusted with creating, implementing, and monitoring the progress of such a cumulative academic program and the infrastructure needed? Hawaii Homebirth Elders Counsel?

If this is for Indigenous providers, for indigenous families, who is evaluating someone's indigenous status and by what criteria? When can that be shared so we can see it? This could pose a serious issue with discrimination for sure and in turn limit access for those communities at highest risk.

Which makes me curious again, wouldn't this be the Native Hawaiian Community? Which has already been accounted for in the original Act?

Is the organization founded in 2019 wanting to take over the Native Hawaiian Traditional Midwifery, the "Indigenous Midwifery" counsel from the already established Papa Ola Lokahi? And is POL involved in this decision?

If this isn't to replace or protect Native, Indigenous Practices who is it for?

Does it protect the community of diverse families that call these islands home? Does it increase safety for birthing people in Hawaii?

Thank you for reading my testimony, I hope that we can find clarity of this Bill and get answers to the questions. I want the best outcome for the families of Hawaii and making thoughtful, judgements is important.

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 1:08:17 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jennifer Weintz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

From: Jennifer Weintz

Date: Jan 27, 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai'i's women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women's reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Weintz

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 1:09:08 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kelsea Klein	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In Support of Bill SB 2661,

I had two very beautiful homebirths because of the knowlege, preparation and accountably with my health that came from my Mid-wife. I will always cherish the support and relationship I've gained My life is forever changed because of the experice in giving birth without fear. Opposing this Bill takes away a family's right and freedom to choose what they think is best for themselfve and the support that they need. That is why is highly support this Bill!

Mahalo,

Kelsea Klein

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 1:16:46 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lora Linehan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I full on support this bill passing.

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 1:20:59 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Teresa M Robertson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To:

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

From: Teresa Robertson

Date: 01/27/2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly support SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I recognize that midwife licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai‘i’s families. Though there were good intentions, the original bill’s exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in historical injustices that cannot go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, traditional Native Hawaiian cultural practices have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

Hawai‘i’s women deserve autonomy in their choice of childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai‘i have always sought the care of traditional midwives, and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate women’s reproductive health by limiting their choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Teresa Robertson



**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 1:37:03 PM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Dr. Ye Nguyen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in full support of SB 2661.

As a licensed naturopathic physician, who also is a traditional midwife, I feel that it is imperative that we give our mamas the right to choose whomever they want to be at their birth.

If we make the practice of traditional midwifery illegal, it will become dangerous for the mama and baby. There needs to be integrative care for our mamas, where they can feel supported by the hospital along with their traditional midwives. When we drive our traditional midwives underground, the dialogue between both worlds becomes nonexistent out of fear of persecution. Continued care by our traditional midwives and ob/gyns, working together is imperative in order to make our births safe, in the event there needs to be transfer of care from the home.

Limiting the home birth midwives in our community will not make it safer. Women have the right to choose who they want to attend their births at home. They will continue to do so, law or no law. We all know that you cannot get in a woman's way, once her mind is made up.

Let our mothers have autonomy over their bodies. You cannot regulate midwifery, just like you cannot regulate a woman's bodies. One woman's birth is not the same as another's. Many of those who are trying to regulate the practice of midwifery & home births come from a place of trauma, because of their own experiences.

As much as I support home births, I support hospital births. I truly believe that birth is a sacred event, not a medical procedure that needs to be regulated. I trust that our mamas know who is the right person to be at their birth and not because of the letters that go next to their names.

As a licensed practitioner, I don't believe that the state of Hawaii can protect our consumers. A license is a false sense of security of safety. Please let our traditional midwives practice. The practice of traditional midwifery will be lost if we do not fight for them.

Thank you for your time and energy.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ye Nguyen

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 1:47:31 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
PC	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Opposition against SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

I am a neonatologist, a pediatric physician specializing in caring for sick babies in a newborn intensive care unit in Hawai'i.

In my practice, I have cared for newborns who have suffered from both illness and injury due to a delay in seeking necessary hospital care by birth attendants who are not licensed to practice in the state.

I strongly oppose any bill that seeks exemptions for birth attendants who do not want or do not qualify for licensure in Hawai'i.

**LATE**

To: The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair; The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair;  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health  
From: Leah Ke‘ala‘aumoe Dowsett, MD, FAAP, FACMG  
Date: 1/27/22  
Re: Strong Opposition against SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

I am a Kauka Kanaka ‘Ōiwi who specializes in the field of medical genetics and genomics. As a rare disease doctor, and as a Native Hawaiian, I recognize the historical trauma between our indigenous community towards western medicine. While I practice “western” medicine, I believe that there is still a space where Native Hawaiian cultural practices and western medicine can co-exist to provide better care for our lāhui. However, I do not believe that midwives should be able to practice without appropriate oversight. I have cared for countless kamaiki who would have been perfectly healthy babies, but have been left neurologically devastated (or worse, have faced death) after having a complicated home birth where the midwife did not recognize the need to seek medical attention. A recently published study by my colleagues demonstrated that infants with hypoxic brain injury were three times more likely to have had a planned home birth in Hawai‘i when compared to infants born in a hospital setting (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35037395/>). **Regulation and licensure for midwives must exist to ensure the safest environment possible for home birth.**

Our mākuahine in Hawai‘i have the right to decide where to give birth and with whom as their birth attendants. They have the right to seek Reproductive Justice, defined as the human right to personal bodily autonomy and have children in a safe community. This proposed bill undermines the original bill’s intent to ensure that home birth occurs as safely as possible with appropriately licensed and skilled providers and thus undermines the ability of wāhine to seek Reproductive Justice. While there already is a provision in the original bill that exempts Native Hawaiian healing practices, this proposed bill seeks to create a new category for exemption entitled “traditional midwives”, which is vaguely defined as “a person who adheres to the core competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and practices under the Hawaii Home Birth Elders Council.” **Such an amendment would open a path for all direct entry midwives, regardless of their education/training/skills, to seek this exemption and the potential for abuse and misappropriation of Native Hawaiian cultural practices already exempted in the original bill by non-Native Hawaiian or other non-indigenous persons.** In fact, an examination of the core competencies of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives does indeed reveal a requirement of knowledge and competency in the use of modern advanced resuscitation techniques and equipment.

We owe it to our keiki and our future generations to ensure the safest environment possible for home birth with regulation and licensure for midwives. **Rejection of SB 2661 will ensure that wāhine who choose to have a home birth will be in the hands of competent providers who have the ‘ike to embrace traditional cultural values and advanced medical interventions when needed to achieve Maui Oli.**

Me ka ‘oia‘i‘o,

Leah Ke‘ala‘aumoe Dowsett, MD, FAAP, FACMG

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 2:28:05 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
alyssa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Greetings Chair, Vice Chair and committee members,

I Alyssa and I am writing to SUPPORT bill SB2661.

I am currently pregnant and using a midwife. I do not want the type of birth a hospital protocol follows and prefer to be in the comfort of my home when in labor. I take care of my health in a very natural way not conducive to the practices in a hospital and it WORKS WONDERFULLY FOR ME. Please respect the right for a woman to choose their health strategy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Alyssa

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 2:48:54 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Pai-Jong Stacy Tsai	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii. I practice at Queen's Medical Center and Kapiolani Medical Center, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 15 years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 3:11:12 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sophia Costa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a woman who chose to have traditional midwifery as my primary care for the pregnancy and birth of my second child, I support this bill. It would be unethical to take that choice away from birthing women in the state of Hawai'i.

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 3:36:57 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Edward Clark	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As access fo all types of midwifery is important to a healthy society, we need to assure the midwives get to continue practicing for the safety of families, especially in ways already proven to be successful here in Hawaii!

I support SB2661!

Edward Clark



**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 4:13:23 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Divya Dethier	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN in Hawaii. I practice at Kapiolani and Queens hospitals, and have been providing prenatal and obstetric care for 5 years. Our government is tasked with ensuring public safety, and that is what this comes down to. Licensure for any healthcare professional, including physicians and midwives, is a way of ensuring the safety of mothers and babies of Hawai'i. Therefore I OPPOSE SB 2661.

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 4:36:38 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Cody Tsukamoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I believe that the people of Hawaii have a right to choose they type of medical procedures/processes/professionals they deem fit for their needs and wants. The government is an entity of the people, they work and serve the people and have no right to dictate the parameters of personal health decisions or pathways. That is why I support SB2661.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 5:15:39 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Nikki-Ann Yee	Testifying for Ma'i Movement Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

Ma'i Movement Hawai'i support SB2661. Cultural and Traditional Midwives as well as Direct-Entry Midwives need to be allowed a pathway to practice and ultimately be recognized as professionals and experts in their fields in the State of Hawai'i.

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 5:28:01 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Laura nunez	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

The tradition and knowledge of these women is sacarles and must be passed down and shared with those open to receiving. There is no need for this precious access to their knowledge and help to be made more difficult by law. Laura nunez

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 5:35:17 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
lau alejandra	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Lau alejandra. I fully support this motion to allow midwives to continue their work. Yes please

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 5:41:11 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
polar codinach	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Polar Codinach

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 5:53:18 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Aimee Fung	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support Traditional Midwives! They should not become illegal! Please allow for all birth practitioners to practice and do not impede on their ability to incorporate or provide cultural practices. Please continue to allow local birth practitioners to be trained by Elder midwives who are from the community and have been practicing in our communities - for over 15 years! Please give the generations to come the choice to have individualized care from birth practitioners who have different cultural practices!! Thank you!!

**LATE**

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:01:52 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Dr Gerard Dericks	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill to exempt traditional midwives from a licensing requirement, and by doing so, allowing mothers to freely choose their local traditional midwives. No one is more concerned about the health and well-being of their child than the mother. Mothers deserve the right to choose whoever they want to help deliver their child in whatever way they want. The only 'regulation' needed is the mother's concern for her child, and natural her desire to find the best midwife for herself. Regulations and licensure will only lead to inferior outcomes in this case. Thank you maintain this crucial human right.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gerard Dericks



**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:23:02 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Thackeray Taylor	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Thackeray Taylor. I'm a USN veteran and have lived here for 10 years.

This bill will allow Midwives and specifically Hawaii Home Birth Collective to oversee traditional midwifery and provide training to future midwives. To my mind this is a good idea, since there seems to be a growing number of people that wish to bring their sons and daughters into the world with the aid of such practitioners. I do not mean to be snarky when I mention that humanity has made it thus far without the licensure of medical professionals, but only to give a friendly reminder in an age when it seems that everything has been legislated over, litigated upon, and squared away by some facet of civic life. Giving birth is a beautiful thing that has rested in the hands of experienced women for far longer than medical professionals, and that is not saying anything to the detriment of those professionals. I must say that it should be a right to give birth under whatever conditions the parent sees fit, and I seriously doubt that any parents that actually require the attention of medical professionals would refuse it in such a critical hour. I have always been impressed by the knowledge and genuine palpable enthusiasm and care traditional midwives possess. Thank you.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 8:40:18 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
marisa wriston	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am strongly in support of SB2661 as I believe it is every birthing persons human rights to choose with whom, where, and by what traditions to give birth. Pregnancy and birth are not a one size fits all situation and the severe medicalization of womens bodies does more harm than good. A woman should be able to choose how they feel safest and most supported in giving birth. This looks different for every woman and to eliminate any birth worker is to deny a birthing person of their personal choice for what is best for them. Traditional midwives are capable and competent and play an incredibly valuable role in the birth community.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:01:19 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Michele Nakamura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Keohokalole and Vice Chair Baker,

I am strongly in favor of this Bill that acknowledges and preserves the important role the Traditional Homebirth Midwives play in our state and culture. As a practicing RN for 30 years in two major hospitals on the island I have experienced and had the privilege of being a part in homebirths with Traditional Midwives. Their knowledge, expertise, professionalism and care exceeds what I have experienced in school and in my own births and what many mothers who have had homebirths with them can attest to.

Pregnancy and birth is the most sacred thing a woman can experience and Traditional Midwives take into account the mother as a whole from spiritual and cultural aspects to the mind and body. There should be no discrimination against them because they don't hold a certificate. Our children are valuable and a mother should not just entrust anyone to help them with their pregnancy and especially the birth of their child. Mothers are encouraged to research and get educated of their options and make the choice that is right for themselves and their baby. These Traditional Midwives I have had the pleasure of experiencing births with, carefully screen mothers and not everyone is deemed a homebirth candidate but they still help them have a healthy pregnancy till they birth in the hospital. Everything is taken into account as safety for the mother and baby is the top priority and medical access is always factored in should it ever be needed.

This Bill will assure that if a mother wants a Traditional Midwife, it is still available to them and for my children as well should they want to go that route. Personally, after knowing and experiencing their care with families for over a decade I wish that option was known to me in the birth of my children. I humbly ask that this Bill is passed to preserve that choice for my children and others should they want that choice.

Sincerely,

Michele Nakamura

808-255-4820

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:21:48 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Rylan Leong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Rylan Leong and I support bill SB2661.

Women have been safely giving birth with Traditional Midwives for CENTURIES and I believe that it is imperative that we let our future generations be able to have a CHOICE in how they want to bring their children into the world.

Mahalo for your time,

Rylan Leong

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 9:56:30 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
adaure ezinne dawson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing today in support of SB 2661. As a student midwife I began my apprenticeship in 2017 and chose this route of study because of its flexibility for me as a mom of 5. My training included traditional midwifery knowledge and education as well as clinical knowledge and assessments. This route also required me demonstrate didactic and hands on midwifery skills. This training would ultimately be preparing me to sit for the nationally recognized certifying NARM exam. I passed my NARM exam and obtained CPM certification in early 2020. This exact exam is also required to be taken by any student midwife who is enrolled in a MEAC accredited midwifery school. The state passed a law in 2019 that only allows for a student enrolled in a MEAC accredited institution and obtains their CPM certification to be licensed. Although I qualified for and passed the same exam required for MEAC enrolled midwifery students, I do not qualify for the state's midwifery license. My training and knowledge gained through my apprenticeship is not sufficient for the state but is sufficient for a national CPM certifying body.

This law passed eliminates the possibility of me legally practicing in a state where my skills are actively sought after. I am a black woman. Black women, even in the state of Hawaii, have much higher rates (3-4x's higher) of maternal morbidity and mortality in the United States. Many minority women are choosing midwives, such as myself, to help guide them safely through their pregnancy and births. Given America's history of mistreatment of black and brown bodies in the medical system it should be no surprise that a midwife with my background and experience is an important choice for community members here on Oahu. I would not turn my back on any community member seeking my service.

Until I am able to complete additional requirements, which could take 2-3 more years, I am unable to practice in this state as a licensed CPM. By default I would choose to practice as a traditional midwife with skills that rival those of other licensed midwives in this state. If SB 2661 is not supported then I stand the chance of being considered illegal and thus criminalized for a profession that I have comparable expertise in. Ultimately, for me, seeking licensure IS something I would personally choose, yet I understand why other traditional midwives would not want to choose this path due to what they may see as red flags and/or inconsistencies in the way this law was written. I ask you today to protect those traditional midwives that are skilled and

knowledgeable but, due to one reason or another, are not able to OR do not want to be licensed. Their choice to be registered under HIHBC should be honored due to the role HIHBC plays in our home birth community. Thank you for your help with protecting traditional midwives in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

A. Ezinne Dawson, CPM

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:17:45 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
rya wait	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I believe it is a woman's right to choose what care is the best for them for their birth: hospital, medical midwife, birthing center, traditional midwife, or even themselves alone at home.

It's crucial for the health of our community and our future keiki to allow women and birthing people to have access to many different options, so they may birth in a way that is the most supportive for them. Everyone who is alive on earth right now is here because, for the vast majority of human history, women have been giving birth with the support of traditional midwives, or alone supported by the intelligent instinct of their own bodies.

Birth is a vulnerable and emotional experience, and hospitals and private birthing centers aren't set up to give women the individual attention and care they need to move through their birth in a way that's the most supportive, and least traumatic, for themselves and their child. Allowing traditional midwives to be able to support our community allows more women to receive the attention and care they deserve and takes a load off over the overwhelm of birthing units at hospitals.

Thank you,

Rya Wait

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/27/2022 10:35:33 PM

Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brienne Lacaillade	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony **in support** of

SB NO 2661

Friday, January 28, 2022

Honolulu, HI

Dear Senator Keohokalole and the Committee on Health,

My name is Brienne Lacaillade. I am a graduate student of public health and a mother to a six-month old. I support SB 2661: Relating to Midwives. My baby was born at home in Waianae supported by traditional midwives. I desire all my future children to enter the world in this same way.

By having the baby at home, I knew I would be free from medical violence. I once had a surgical procedure done as a kid during which I was not adequately anesthetized. This created a fear of surgery and doctors. Instead we invited traditional midwives into our home, saving me from potentially having a scary experience with anesthesia (as done in hospitals), and keeping us from being in a hospital where COVID could be transmitted as well as a long trip to Town to a hospital from the West side. I felt safe. We got to include our cultural practices surrounding the birth that would not be possible in a medical setting. I got the birth I wanted because I got to choose who would care for baby and I. Everyone should be able to make the choice that is best for them.

Our baby was greeted into this world by a team of women whom we had gotten to know during prenatal home visits. In a hospital we would have been with strangers during the birth and labor. Instead, we had women who knew all our concerns, goals, and family members. We all trusted each other. They brought their invaluable, beautiful wisdom and experience that the community needs to stay strong and attached to their culture.

Birthing people should be able to choose who attends their birth, whether any kind of midwife or other provider. It is a human right. Traditional midwives preserve culture with the care they give to the community by reminding us that birth is sacred.



Thank you for your consideration,

Brienne Lacaillade

Waianae, HI 96792



**LATE**

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Honorable members of the Senate Committee on Health

Selena Green, CPM, LM  
January 27, 2022

Re: Strong Support for SB 2661, a measure relating to midwives

Hearing: January 28, 2022 at 1:00pm via Videoconference

Aloha,

I strongly **support** and ask that you pass SB 2661, a bill that exempts traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

I am aware that Act 32 was a step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though the intentions were good, the original bill's exclusion of traditional midwives is rooted in deep historical injustices that cannot continue to be allowed to go unrecognized and unremedied. For too long, the traditional cultural practices of BIPOC peoples have been dismissed, disrespected, and lost to history because of policies like these.

It is a fundamental right that Hawai'i's birthing persons have autonomy in their choice of a childbirth provider. Choosing where and with whom to give birth is a basic human right. Families in Hawai'i have always sought the care of the traditional midwives in their communities and it is essential that they are able to continue doing so.

Continuing to regulate reproductive health by limiting choices in prenatal and birth care is not acceptable.

I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2661 to exempt traditional midwives from midwifery licensing requirements.

Mahalo for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Selena M. Green, CPM, LM

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 12:19:20 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Bronson Kainoa Kiyoshi Azama	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill as the State should not have the authority to "certify" practitioners. Cultural Practitioners of childbirth should be allowed to operate outside of the system as it involves more than just the aspects of physical labor, but a spiritual process as well, and as we are all taught in school the State and the Church are two separate entities, neither to interfere with the others affairs.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 12:43:14 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Martina Kamaka	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Health,

I am a Native Hawaiian family physician who is opposing this bill. Although I value our traditional healing practices, I believe this bill is too broad and would allow too many requests for exemptions. I am concerned as it speaks to racism and seeks to address it and yet, the connection between racism and how this bill, which is placed clearly in Hawaii, addresses racism is not well laid out. The use of the term "traditional" could be confusing as we in Hawaii think of "traditional" in the context of "traditional Native Hawaiian" healing practices. Also, naming the Hawaii Home Birth Elders Council in this bill may lead the public to think of a Native Hawaiian elders council (where this term is usually heard) which it is not. I worry about misunderstanding by the public. The Hawaii home birth group does not appear to have a focus on Native Hawaiian practices and the Aboriginal Council of Midwives is based out of Canada. Do our traditional healers and practitioners of Native Hawaiian midwifery support these core competencies? Do any of these core competencies conflict with these exemptions? Most importantly, as a physician who must be licensed and submit to licensing requirements, I understand that this is a way for the State to try to protect it's citizens. Being licensed assumes an acceptable level of competence. Why put our keiki at risk by allowing very broad exemptions? Childbirth is full of risks and complications have life long effects. Licensing was developed for the purpose of safety in mind; most healthcare providers understand and accept its function and purpose. I am not anti midwifery, but I am "anti" avoiding that which is put in place to protect our citizens, especially our precious keiki. Why would we hide from licensing by requesting exemptions? Why would anyone want to put our keiki at risk?

Mahalo for allowing me to testify,

Martina Kamaka, MD

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 7:25:15 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kayla Parker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting my testimony today in FULL SUPPORT of SB2661.

My name is Kayla Parker, I am a mother of 4 children. My husband and I have chose to have two incredible homebirths in Hawai'i with our traditional midwife. The level of highly skilled care and nuturing attention I recieved through prenatal, my birth, and postnatal far surpasses anything I had ever experienced in the hospital with my previous two births. In fact our amazing experiences with our traditional midwife have made such an impact on us that it has been life changing. This is the way birth was meant to be, and it MUST be prserved. The birthing families in Hawai'i MUST remain to have the ability to make our own informed birthing choices that align with our beliefs, culture, and tradition. To take this choice away from us would be detrimental to Hawai'i's community. On top of that, traditional midwives have ancient knowledge and skills that need to be preserved and continued to be passed down. Thank you for reading my testimony, I truly appreciate the chance to express my support of SB2661.

Sincerely,

Kayla Parker

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 7:44:43 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Erica McMillan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Hawaii Legislators,

I am a constituent in your community, I care about issues in our islands, I share information with others, and I vote regularly. I ask that you consider and vote in favor on midwifery bill SB1661 for the following reasons:

Women and families today are no longer satisfied to sit back and accept a one-size fits all option for their care providers. More and more they are seeking and demanding the ability to have care providers whose belief systems and cultural practices are in alignment with their own. This trend will only continue to grow. We must provide pathways to education for these current and future midwifery care providers that will reflect the beliefs and practices of the birthing communities they serve.

This bill will greatly impact the ability for many mothers to have access to the care they are seeking. For midwives the impact of Bill 2661 is monumental. Many women enter the path to their midwifery education after having children themselves. As mothers it's incredibly challenging to pursue higher education in general and having to leave the islands to pursue the necessary training to complete their midwifery education can close that path off entirely. Hawaii being such an isolated community with such diverse cultural lineages, it only makes sense to offer provisions for women to complete midwifery training locally under the guidance of the competent practitioners we already have here in the islands. Bill 2661 will benefit those who care about the issue without impeding on the rights of those who it doesn't affect. Passing this bill will be a win win for everyone involved! On behalf of your constituents I ask that you please support bill 2661.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Erica McMillan

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 7:59:25 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Amanda Conde	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To the Hawaii State Senate and House of Representatives,

My name is Amanda and I am testifying in support of SB2661. I am a mom of four children ages 6, 4, 2, and 7 months. My husband and I planned a home birth for our last child and we were so very thankful to have found a wonderful, experienced traditional midwife and her team. Throughout this relationship, we were listened to, supported, educated, cared for exceptionally and loved like family. In fact, I still feel like family even after postpartum care is complete!

The support I received from my birthing team was phenomenal and, after having three hospital births prior, for me being able to give birth at home was a realization of what this experience could truly be. I was so thankful to have that choice. Please vote and pass SB2661 to preserve the rights of moms in Hawaii to receive medical care of their choosing from a traditional midwife during one of the most challenging yet life-changing events a family can experience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Amanda Conde

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 8:47:49 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kristl Woo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Keohokalole and Vice Chair Baker,

I am in strong support of SB2661.

My name is Kristl Woo and I was born in Hawaii and have lived here all my life. I've been a registered voter since the age of 18 and currently work full-time in the healthcare services industry. I also have a bookkeeping business that I do on the side.

I support SB2661 because it will preserve several aspects of our native Hawaiian culture as well as preserve the art of the traditional midwife. It also more importantly will preserve the options that parents and families now have in our islands and state to choose how they would like to birth and their birth practitioners they would like present at their birth.

Birth is such a beautiful and sacred experience. It can empower a mother to take responsibility of not only her body but for her child. The traditional midwife and birth practitioners encourage and support families in having this experience.

I've been fortunate to experience the interaction between families and the traditional midwives/birth practitioners and the impact they have during pregnancy, labor and birth for families. How they provide these families with care draws the families closer together and shows them how to embrace the birth process.

I also support SB2661 for the opportunity it will continue to provide birth practitioners to train with elder midwives so these skills and traditions can be passed down to the next generation. It will allow our Hawaiian culture to carry on.

I support SB2661 because it will allow our local birth practitioners and traditional midwives to continue what they're doing and also make it clear for all parties involved what is being provided and what is not provided. There's accountability.

Again I support SB2661 because it will preserve the Hawaiian culture and allow traditional midwives to continue to serve our families as well as train the next generations and pass on these traditions and preserve the options are local families have for birth.

Mahalo for your time and service.



With gratitude,

Kristl

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 8:54:57 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
kg	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am a neonatologist in Hawai'i and remain disheartened by the amount of babies I have had to take off life support because of the Hawai'i Government's failure to follow the national standard of care and impose licensure requirements for those involved in the birthing process. How many more of this state's babies must die for someone to do what is best for these patients who do not yet have a voice.

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 9:47:34 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Hayley Grenier	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HIHBC'S Pro Mid-wifery

Bill # SB2661

January 28th 2022 @ 1:00pm

-In Support-

I am Hayley Grenier and I testify in favor of HIHBC'S Pro Mid-wifery Bill SB2661.

This Bill will have positive impact on Midwives, CNMs, Direct-Entry Midwives, CPMs, Traditional Midwives and Mid-wifery students. I am a member of the Hawaii Home Birth Collective and it is important to me and my family and future generations that Mid-wifery in Hawaii Respect and Permanently exempt traditional midwives and birth attendants serving our community! During this time with Covid, Hawaii families deserve access to safe, legal Mid-wifery care. I had my first child with homebirth care. Midwives are capable and trained, they give the best comforting care during such a personal time for mother, baby and family. I feel so blessed and honored for the one on one care me and my child encountered. I had a healthy pregnancy and appreciated the support of a natural childbirth free from unnecessary pressure and medications. Hawaii's diversified network of midwives stand in integrity and do not need comparison number to the medical system in order to justify the means of preservation. Please, By legally recognizing the Traditional Midwife and removing the end date of the exemption we preserve the ability of qualified midwives to practice legally in hawaii and continue the benefits of diversity to support families birthing the next generation. Thank you.

Hayley Grenier

**SB-2661**

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 9:55:57 AM  
Testimony for HTH on 1/28/2022 1:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Carren Ramos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill because I believe ALL birthing options should be kept available for families now and in the future.

To have a CHOICE is FREEDOM.