



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
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**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023  
2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
H.B. 955, H.D. 1, RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES**

Chair Nakashima 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), Professional and Vocational Licensing Division's (Division) Midwives Licensing Program. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) exempt birth attendants practicing on or before 7/1/2025 from licensure requirements, under certain conditions; and (2) expand qualifications for licensure to include the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process.

The Department is concerned with the amendments to page 2, lines 16-21, the exemptions provision, which deletes the requirement that a student midwife must currently be "enrolled in a midwifery education program..." and that the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) preceptor is not a "midwife," or that a Midwifery Education

Accreditation Council (MEAC) qualified preceptor is also not a “midwife.” The NARM website provides that:

A NARM Registered Preceptor is a midwife who meets requirements for supervising CPM candidates and has current, approved registration through NARM. The Registered Preceptor must be credentialed as a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM), Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), Certified Midwife (CM); or must be a licensed practitioner legally recognized by a state/jurisdiction to provide maternity care. A preceptor must have an additional three years of experience after credentialing or fifty primary/co-primary births beyond entry-level CPM requirements. Additionally, they must also have ten continuity of care births beyond entry-level CPM requirements. A preceptor must have attended a minimum of ten out-of-hospital births in the last three years.<sup>1</sup>

The suggested language in this bill is inconsistent with the standards set forth by NARM. Further, it is unclear whether these amendments would meet MEAC standards.

Page 3, lines 4-5, the extension of the repeal date for the birth attendant exemption of July 1, 2023 to July 1, 2025, the Department takes no position on this amendment. However, it should be noted that prior to this chapter being enacted, the Department expressed concerns with the inclusion of an individual who may practice midwifery as a birth attendant, but not be subject to the same licensing requirements of this chapter. The Department does not believe HRS chapter 457-J is an appropriate chapter for these exempt birth attendants based on the Hawaii Regulatory Reform Act’s policy set forth in HRS section 26H-2.

Finally, on page 6, lines 7-16, the Department feels that completion of additional pathways towards a recognized national certification for certified professional midwives would meet the minimum qualifications for midwife licensure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://narm.org/preceptors/>

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee



Director of Council Services  
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.

Councilmembers  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tasha Kama  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins

Deputy Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

February 14, 2023

TO: The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima, Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2023; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH REVISION ON HB 955, HD1, RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support with revision** on this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to extend birth attendants' exemption from licensure requirements through July 1, 2025.

The Maui County Council adopted Resolution 23-28, "URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO ENACT A STATUTE PERMANENTLY EXEMPTING BIRTH ATTENDANTS FROM STATE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS," in support of the original version of this measure. Therefore, I offer this testimony on the Council's behalf.

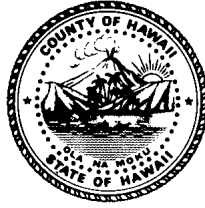
The Maui County Council supports this measure, with a revision explained below, for the following reasons:

1. If the exemption expires, indigenous midwives and traditional birthing practitioners will be at risk of being criminalized.
2. Midwifery is one of the oldest women's rights issues in history, and traditional birthing practices of all cultures deserve protection.
3. The Maui County Council respectfully requests that the measure return to its original form, permanently exempting birth attendants from licensure requirements. consistent with Act 32 (2019): "By the end of the three-year period, the legislature intends to enact statutes that will incorporate all birth practitioners and allow them to practice to the fullest extent under the law."

For the foregoing reasons, the Maui County Council **supports with revision** this measure.

ocs:proj:legis:23legis:23testimony:hb955\_hd1\_paf23-007(40)\_jpp

**Jennifer Kagiwada**  
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272  
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## HAWAI‘I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

DATE: February 13, 2023  
TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2  
SUBJECT: HB 955

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

I am writing to you in strong support of HB 955. This is an accessibility issue for those across our State but specifically in Hawai‘i County. As the largest island with the most rural population areas we need to be providing more freedom and options for those with limited resources to birthing support in ways that meet their unique needs. Under the exemption (Act 32 (2019), Section 457-J, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes), that currently allows birth attendants to attend births without State licensure, traditional and indigenous midwifery practices are protected from risk of criminality or, worse, cultural erasure. If this exemption is allowed to expire on July 1, 2023 it will be a direct hinderance to birthing people’s rights to choose where to give birth and who they want as their preferred birth attendant. These choices are integral to providing safety, care, bodily autonomy, and comfort during birth. This is of significant importance to our State as maternal mortality outcomes are disproportionately high among Black, Filipino, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander birthing people. Also of note are that the requirements for licensure detailed in Act 32 (2019) are prohibitively difficult for many local families to achieve because there are currently no Midwifery Education Accreditation Council schools in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada'.

Jenn Kagiwada





# Pacific Birth Collective

pacificbirthcollective@gmail.com  
pacificbirthcollective.org

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**PBC Board**

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To:

Chair Nakashima and Committee Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From:

Pacific Birth Collective  
Vice President Kiana Rowley

Date: February 13, 2023

Re: Strong Support for HB955

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

The Pacific Birth Collective strongly supports HB995 and we urge you to pass this important piece of legislation.

PBC serves women, families, and birth and wellness service providers throughout Hawaii. We support autonomy in birth choice, whatever that choice may be. We support this resolution 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 resolution is a good step toward respecting cultural traditions, protecting the autonomy of women and families, and not policing women's reproductive choices.

Access to midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all birthing people and their children. We support the continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J. These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable



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ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, and cultural and religious freedom for Hawai'i.

After July 2023, the temporary exemption is set to expire, criminalizing midwifery practitioners who are filling a vital need in our communities. The perpetuation of community-based apprenticeship for the training of midwives is essential for safety and equitable access to midwifery care for all people, especially Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color families today and for future generations.

Please support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai'i. Maintain a pathway for local people to learn traditional practices of health and healing from elders in their own communities.

We do recognize that midwifery licensure was a positive step toward better maternity care for Hawai'i's families. Though there were good intentions behind the law, 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 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.

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



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frequently 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.

We respectfully ask that you pass HB995 for all of these reasons.

Mahalo,

Kiana Rowley  
Pacific Birth Collective Vice President



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

**Testimony of the Hawaii Home Birth Task Force Chair  
And Board President of the Hawaii Home Birth Collective**

**Before the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce**

**Wednesday February 15, 2023 2:00 p.m.**

**State Capitol, Via Video Conference/ Room 329 HB 955 HD1 , Relating to Chapter 457J**

Aloha Chair Nakashima and Members of the Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee:

My name is Kristie Duarte and I was the Chair of the Hawaii Home Birth Task Force created by [Act 32 \(2019\)](#). I am also the Board President of the Hawaii Home Birth Collective (HIHBC), an organization dedicated to the preservation, perpetuation, and diversity of home birth practices and autonomy in home birth midwifery care. We continue to offer **full support of HB 955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated**, to match Oregon's State law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices. We would also like to offer additional comments to clarify some misconceptions that have been brought up in previous testimony and questions from legislators:

**Point #1: According to the DCCA website, there are currently 28 Licensed Midwives throughout the islands, but many are not currently practicing or taking clients, and NONE have obtained their licensure through the required MEAC accredited school pathway without leaving Hawaii to complete their training. Others have moved here from the Mainland to complete their training, but none of these have fully trained in Hawaii while attending a MEAC accredited school.**

- **Out of the 28 Midwives licensed under [HRS § 457J](#):**
  - **Only 14 Licensed Midwives are currently practicing and accepting clients** throughout the islands - and just 2 are available to service the entire island of Oahu. Zero are currently serving the communities of Molokai, Lanai, or Hana.
  - **0 have obtained their license through the MEAC school while being fully trained in Hawaii.** All local MEAC-pathway CPMs have had to travel to other states in order to attend enough births to qualify - even the ones who took courses online.
  - **15 moved to Hawaii with their certification already obtained.** This highlights the clear educational disadvantage for local midwives. Hawaii's current licensure requirements inherently

favor midwives trained on the continent who haven't attended any births here in Hawaii, and may be unfamiliar with the different needs and healthcare facilities that may or may not be available in different areas of different islands.

**Point # 2: On July 1, 2023, birth attendants with different cultural skills and practices will become illegal unless we pass new legislation this year.**

- They will be punished with the following penalties:

***[§457J-13] Penalties.** Any person who violates this chapter or rules adopted pursuant thereto shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 for each separate offense. For purposes of this section, each day of violation shall constitute a separate offense. [L 2019, c 32, pt of §2]*

**Point #3: The 3 year exemption period for Birth Attendants in Act 32 (2019) was not a “grace period to allow them time to become certified” - their practice of traditional midwifery is recognized in the Sunrise Analysis Reports of 1999 and 2017 as a different type of practitioner whose skills are valued and sometimes preferred.**

- [Act 32 \(2019\)](#) stated “By the end of the three year period, **the legislature intends to enact statutes that will incorporate all birth practitioners** and allow them to practice to the fullest extent under the law.”
- [Act 32 \(2019\)](#) never intended for these birth practitioners to obtain licensure, but rather intended for the Legislature to convene a task force and pass legislation based on their recommendations. [SB2428 \(2020\)](#), [SB893 \(2021\)](#), and [SB2661 \(2022\)](#) were different suggestions recommended by the task force, but the legislature didn't pass those, so we have now arrived at the simplest, least controversial recommendations for [HB955 / SB1047](#): 1) allow birth attendants to continue to practice under the same conditions they have been since 2019; and 2) allow all Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) to qualify for licensure, not just the ones who have attended MEAC-accredited schools on the continent.
- **Birth attendants have different traditional, cultural, and/or religious values and practices than CPMs. To require them to obtain a Western education in addition to their traditional training and education is not what the various Sunrise Reports recommended.**

**Point #4: Traditionally- trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued, preferred, and it should be the birthing person's choice.**

- There was unanimous agreement with all 12 members of the 2019 [Home Birth Task Force Report](#) that:
  - 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 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 continue to serve their communities.**

- **Each woman has a right to choose where and with whom she gives birth**
- The 2/8/2023 [Committee Report](#) from the House Health & Human Services Committee stated:  
*“Your Committee finds that traditionally-trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and preferred by some consumers, and that the type of birth attendant utilized at a birth should be the birthing person’s choice.”*
- The Maui County Council unanimously passed Resolution [23-28](#) on 2/3/23 URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO ENACT A STATUTE PERMANENTLY EXEMPTING BIRTH ATTENDANTS FROM STATE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS.

**Point #5: It was NOT an oversight of the legislature in 1998 that midwifery became unregulated when the CNM-midwifery law was repealed with the passage of HB2855 (Act 279).** There was another bill going through the legislature at the same time proposing licensure of CPMs. That bill was deferred in order to complete a Sunrise Analysis by the Auditor, which concluded in the 1999 Sunrise Report, that “regulation would be premature until key issues are resolved.”

- Both **Sunrise Analysis Reports of [1999](#) and [2017](#) acknowledged Traditional Midwives** as a legitimate segment of the midwifery profession in Hawai’i.
  - The [1999 Sunrise Analysis](#) was concerned about **fragmented regulation** and a lack of agreement about qualifications and practice standards for lay midwifery- due to there being so many different types (Certified Professional, Certified, Lay, Direct-entry, traditional or empirical, pg. 2, 13)
  - Included on the last page of the 1999 Report was a response from the Department of Health stating **“there should be a distinction”** in regulation between the different types of midwives.
  - The [2017 Sunrise Analysis](#) recommended that **licensure NOT benefit only one segment of the midwifery profession** and that **licensure should actually encompass ALL practicing midwives** - recommending the legislature examine other standards for traditional midwives outside of requiring a certification from a private midwifery association - **because to require certification would create an unnecessary and unfair competitive advantage for CPMs.**
- [Act 32 \(2019\)](#) created a task force to propose legislation that would **incorporate all birth practitioners**, to be able to regulate the entire profession of midwifery, and not just segments of it to avoid an unnecessary and unfair competitive advantage.

**Point #6: HB 955 fulfills the requirements of The [Hawai'i Regulatory Licensing Reform Act, HRS § Chapter 26H](#).**

- The Hawaii Regulatory Licensing Reform Act states:  
*“Regulation in the form of full licensure **or other restrictions** on certain professions or vocations shall be retained or adopted when the health, safety, or welfare of the consumer may be jeopardized by the nature of the service offered by the provider”.*
- Regulation of the birth attendant through use of “other restrictions” other than licensure is found in the requirements set forth in [HRS 457J \(6\)-5](#), which outlines informed consent disclosure forms and very specific conditions under which the birth attendants are allowed to practice. **HB 955 HD1 continues to resolve this key issue through regulation of the birth attendant through the restrictions set forth in this exemption.**
- **This does not mean licensure is voluntary.** It means that midwives are regulated through licensure, and birth attendants are regulated through other restrictions. **These restrictions on birth attendants have allowed the community to still have access to culturally appropriate care and still be able to make informed decisions about their reproductive rights.** Ultimately, the health, safety and welfare of the consumer is protected through the regulations set forth in [HRS 457J\(6\)-5](#).

**Point #7: The [Hawai'i Regulatory Licensing Reform Act, HRS § Chapter 26H](#), states that “regulation must not unreasonably restrict entry into professions and vocations by all qualified persons”.**

- **Hawaii's midwifery law currently leaves out a nationally recognized pathway to certification which would allow for more local midwives to obtain licensure** through an approved educational route of entry provided by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) through the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP).
- People certified through this educational evaluation process (PEP) have completed a rigorous approved educational route and attended at least 55 births under the supervision of a registered preceptor, demonstrated clinical skills, and **passed the same exam that is required for certification of those who attend a MEAC accredited school.**
- For opponents to say a MEAC education is “the same cost as UH” really reflects an inability to understand our communities. Many of Hawaii’s families and students, especially from lower income rural communities, are priced out of higher education of any kind. It costs so much more than the standard \$15-50 k for tuition: for HIHBC’s licensed midwives, it has costs thousands in travel & lodging over the years, they needed to pay their preceptor for their time (which was difficult for them to even find one to work with, having even to pay for a preceptor to move here), and they needed someone

to financially support them with rent / utilities / food etc because it's hard for student midwives to maintain any type of employment while they're always on-call for births that could happen at any time.

- Although a few of the MEAC accredited colleges are available online, this does not make it accessible for those who do not have steady online access (like our rural areas) and for those who are not financially supported, as described above. Requiring only the MEAC accredited pathway for CPMs is causing a disproportionate hardship for people who live in Hawaii, especially women of color and people who live in underserved communities. **The Portfolio Evaluation Process is included in HB 955 HD 1 as a pathway to obtain the same certification as a MEAC accredited pathway, resulting in qualification for licensure.**

**Point #8: Oregon State has an exemption which regulates their Traditional Midwives, similar to the birth attendant exemption in HB 955 HD 1.**

- **Birth Attendant is defined the same way as it is in [Oregon State](#)- by similar restrictions they must follow to practice;**
- Birth attendants/ Midwives who have lost their license elsewhere are required when they move to Hawaii to disclose to their client in the [Required Disclosure Form](#) provided by the DCCA, both verbally and in written form:

*“any information/documentation of any judgment, award, disciplinary sanction, order, or other determination that adjudges or finds that he/she committed misconduct or was criminally or civilly liable for conduct relating to midwifery by a licensing or regulatory authority, territory, state, or any other jurisdiction”.*

**For those reasons, we are respectfully requesting that the CPC Committee pass HB955 HD 1, but remove the Birth Attendant expiration date of July 1, 2025, as the Maui County Council requested.**

Respectfully,

Kristie Duarte, President

Hawaii Homebirth Collective



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:14:57 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Whitney Herrelson	Maui Midwifery	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a licensed midwife practicing on the island of Maui. I own Maui Midwifery.

I attended a MEAC accredited 4-year bachelors of science in midwifery program based out of Utah, and I got my clinical training in Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Utah at birth centers. I began my program in late 2017, finishing in early 2023. I was in school when Act 32 went into effect. According to Act 32, I could no longer be precepted by unlicensed midwives. I was not able to find a "qualified preceptor" on Maui, and so I had to leave the state to get my clinical finished. In 2020 alone I spent 6 months away from my home, my children, and my husband. In addition, this travel tacked on thousands and thousands of dollars on top of my \$26,400 degree. I recieved a full PELL grant, and still graduated with \$20,000 in student loan debt. I want to convey how difficult it was for me to obtain this credential while living on a neighbor island, where we currently have 3 licnesed midwives attending births, only one of whom takes students and only occasionally. The MEAC degree pathway is just not accessible from Maui, and I assume from other neighbor islands. These are the areas where midwives are needed most.- rural, underserved healthcare desserts, with worsening maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

In addition, my degree program and clinical training is based in a very medicalized, Western, Americanized style of healthcare. It is not focused on culture, and gave me llittle to no preperation for caring for Native Hawaiian or other lcoal peoples. I did not have the opportunity to train in this community, and therefore I am now serving a community that I know very little about. I don't know local's specific barriers to health, how their cultures shape their health choices, or what family structures mean to them. These are things you know because you've spent time around a family's kitchen table, you've been to their kid's birthday parties, and you've gone to church together. That is what community midwifery is - caring for our neighbors, our congregation, our ohana. We must preserve it for the health of the state. At the very least, we should not criminalize it.

Please adopt a pathway for a portfolio evaluation process (PEP) certification to state licensure. This pathway will allow for midwives to train in their own communities.

Please allow traditional birth attendants to continue to practice openly. They are important, valued members of their communities that fill a need that is neglected by modern medicine. Families seek them out. This will not stop if they are criminalized, but it will make their practice less safe.

Whitney Herrelson BSM, CPM, LM

Maui Midwifery

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 4:04:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kii Kahoohanohano	Malama Na Pua O Haumea, PBC, HiHBC, task force rep for TM, HMC	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha mai Kakou,

My name is Ki’aniokalani Kaho’ohanohano and I am in strong support of HB955, which will protect pathways and cultural and religious traditions in birthing practices in Hawai’i. I have been serving Maui as a cultural practitioner of lomi lomi, la’au lapa’au, ho’oponopono, for over twenty years. It is this work which brought me to birth work and the opportunity to apprentice as a pale keiki. I have had multiple sources and Kumu, and learned by doing, the way of our kūpuna. I apprenticed and assisted one of my mentors Tina Garzero, “Maui’s county’s women of excellence award winner“, for over 10 years until her passing. I have since continued to hold the torch, and provide full spectrum of care to women and families in Maui County. My many mentors continue through the years to support my growth and learning. This is not a job, and I don’t often even get paid much. It is my kuleana... I work by donation and work often with underserved rural and often low income families. I offer free prenatal clinics from Honokohau to East Maui, birth education classes, nutritional support and more. Our approach is based on preventive and proactive care, and we expect full accountability and integrity from our families, as they do from us. We spend hours in preparing and educating our families.

The education required by the current law doesn’t exist in our state, is very expensive, and requires preceptors which Hawai’i does not have. Quite honestly, medical midwifery is a model that contradicts everything I am. The ‘Ike that has been passed down to me is rare, almost to erasure, and these practices are what heal women of all backgrounds, because we all are human first. We all need to regain our cultural traditions that will heal us, and to receive the care we deserve in our most vulnerable times. When folks ask me to attend their births, they choose me because of my mindset and approach to their heightened state of wellness, pregnancy. They choose me for the training and dedication I DO have, which is based in traditional and cultural practices. I know we have become other people’s children in Hawai’i and beyond, adopting new traditions and practices, and for some that is okay. For some it is not. All birthing families should have bodily autonomy and medical freedom in the most sacred rite of passage, giving birth! We were born, created as wāhine to procreate, hānau...It is proven that cultural competency improves health disparities, especially in the birth process, and we fill that gap. It is shown clearly in countries where midwives/birth attendants are abundant, there are less disparities. Where as the US has the highest disparities of all “civilized” nations, with very little midwives/birth attendants. Modern medicalized birth is not anymore safe, it’s quite the contrary, causing terrible harm in too many cases attempting to control a natural process. If that’s where someone feels safe, that’s where they should be! But the bottom line is they already have that choice. We

deserve to have a choice too ❤️ Terrifying statistics just released state that most maternal deaths could have been avoided in hospitals, and black and brown bodies have the highest disparities .

I am a mother of five homebirth babies, and have been able through my own births, to heal generations of trauma. My keiki were born, gently into this world on the lands that their kūpuna were once born...prepared, held, and guided by traditional midwives each time. If you have never attended birth at home, you can't even imagine how beautiful it can be ❤️

For the past 3 years we have practiced under the current traditional birth attendant exemption, and been busier than ever since Covid! My transfer rate was less than 5%, never in emergency. When in prenatal process I discover that for whatever reason the birth is not low risk, I transfer care of mamas, but never leave their side. We care very much for our families which become like 'Ohana to us. This is what is missing in modern medicine, relationships. I have 'ohana that I have helped with all their babies, and in July 2023, if this legislation sb1047/hb955 (2023) does not pass, it will prevent them from having me, and prevent me from helping them, even though they choose me for future births. I have had multiple apprentice for years, and this will also eliminate this pathway, and our ability to share with future generations.

There are so few traditional birth attendants left, due to intentional erasure of cultural practices. Let us learn from the task force report, the report to the governor, the United Nation's recommendations, and all the very important sources that show that traditional birth attendants improve health and wellness of birthing families. Please don't let this exemption be taken away from all of us. My keiki are begging you....especially my Wailua girl who hopes to be a traditional birth attendant one day like her mama ❤️

Me Ka Ha'aha'a,

Ki'inaniokalani Kaho'ohanohano  
Mālama Nā Pua O Haumea  
Pacific Birth Collective  
Hawai'i Homebirth Collective  
Task Force TM Representative  
Hawai'i Midwifery Council  
808-276-3365



2/13/2023

**OPPOSITION TO HB955HD1**

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Representative Mark Nakashima, Chair  
Representative Jackson Sayama, 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  
Melissa W. Chong, LM, CPM, Maui Representative  
Nina Millar, LM, RN, CPM, Hawai'i Island Representative  
[www.midwiveshawaii.org](http://www.midwiveshawaii.org)

Time: Thirty-Second Legislature Regular Session of 2023  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 2:00PM

Dear Representative Mark Nakashima, Representative Jackson Sayama and committee members:

Midwives Alliance of Hawai'i (MAH) opposes HB955HD1 Relating to Chapter 457J, Hawaii Revised Statutes. We respect that amendments were made, including the extension of condoned unlicensed activity through 2025, and we remain opposed to HB955HD1.

- **Mandatory licensure for all independent autonomous health care providers who utilize modern tools and medicine is a standard in Hawai'i. Voting NO on HB955HD1 upholds this standard.**
- Unlicensed midwifery activity does not protect the consumer. We encourage you to **vote NO on HB955HD1 in order to support Consumer Protection.**
- **Accredited education is obtainable while living in Hawai'i** and costs \$4-7.5K per year for 3 years (less than the cost to go to UH Manoa). HRS 457J requires

accredited education for licensure. The education requirement currently in law means a minimum of a GED and a certificate in midwifery. Accredited education has been available for 22 years. **HB955HD1 would require only a minimum of a GED for education to be an autonomous healthcare provider practicing in Hawai'i as a licensed midwife.**

- Requiring mandatory licensure is in accordance with HRS Chapter 26H. HRS Chapter 26H requires mandatory licensure “when the health, safety, or welfare of the consumer may be jeopardized by the nature of the service offered by the provider.”
- The 28 currently licensed midwives were unlicensed before HRS457J. There was a 21 year gap of mandatory licensure prior to HRS457J due to a legislative oversight. **The unlicensed midwives did not lose their cultural practices and cultural knowledge when they became licensed under HRS 457J; nor does it restrict their cultural practice.** Many midwives who were opposed to licensure obtained their license.
- **Continuing an exemption for self-identified birth attendants creates voluntary midwifery licensure, a permanent ability for anyone to practice midwifery without a license, and invites midwives and birth attendants who have lost their license in other states or had poor outcomes to move to Hawai'i to practice without oversight.** This occurred during 1998-2019 when there was no midwifery licensure. **That is why we encourage the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce to vote NO on HB955HD1.**
- A continued exemption serves birth attendants rather than protecting the consumer.
- **Midwifery care is a business by all licensed and unlicensed providers, charging between \$5-\$10K per birth.** This is not a free or minimal cost service. **Voting NO on HB955HD1 ensures there are protections for both the consumer and commerce.**
- The same midwives who were eligible to train others through the PEP process are also eligible to train student midwives under MEAC accredited education. HRS 457J does not eliminate midwifery teachers.
- The difference between PEP and MEAC pathways: MEAC is receiving standardized accredited education (curriculum) while also working with hands-on trainers (midwives). PEP is apprenticing with a hands-on trainer (midwife) and learning the midwife's knowledge (no standardized education curriculum). The hands-on portion for skills is the same in both programs.

Hawai‘i Department of Health regulated midwives for over 65 years, providing registration, then certification, then licensure, while overseeing that competencies were met by the regulated midwives. By an oversight of the legislature in 1998, they repealed the midwifery law under the Department of Health and moved the licensure of midwives to the Board of Nursing. However, only certified nurse-midwives were eligible for licensure and there was no longer a law that stated one must be licensed in order to practice midwifery. It was not the legislature's intention to allow anyone to practice midwifery without oversight from 1998 through 2019, yet that was the result.

Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) 457J was enacted in 2019 to license all midwives who were not nurses, after two State Auditor reports in 1999 and 2017 concluded the same - midwives need mandatory licensure. **HRS 457J provided a temporary exemption for birth attendants to attend births without a license until June 30, 2023. The four year exemption was to provide birth attendants time to either define a pathway that they preferred that is not midwifery but demonstrates minimum education and competencies of birth attendance, or to obtain the necessary minimum midwifery education and competencies from accredited schools.**

**Both the International Confederation of Midwives educational standards and the US Midwifery Education Regulation & Association**, which included all national midwifery education accrediting bodies, accredited certifying bodies, professional organizations and the International Center for Traditional Childbearing, **recommend accredited midwifery education as the minimum standard for licensure as of January 1, 2020.** Ensuring a baseline standardized education for midwifery is a minimum update for this health profession, as the profession does not yet require a minimum degree. Updating educational requirements of any health profession is necessary to keep up with the increased skill sets and scope of practice.

HB955HD1 would remove public protections for consumers and allow an open number of people to practice without minimum education and training in midwifery while utilizing modern tools as autonomous healthcare providers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. We strongly urge you to **vote NO on HB955HD1.**

Respectfully,  
Midwives Alliance of Hawai‘i Board

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## ISLAND MAMAS MIDWIFERY

(808)990-0394  
Islandmamasmidwifery  
@me.com

Dani Dougherty CPM, LM  
40 Pohakulani St.  
Hilo, HI 96720

February 14, 2023

**To: House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce**

**CHAIR: Representative Mark Nakashima**

**VICE CHAIR: Representative Jackson Sayama**

Hawaii State Capital

415 South Beretania St.

Honolulu, HI 96813

32nd Legislative Regular Session 2023

Wednesday, February 15th, 2023 at 2:00PM

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony regarding HB955HD1. I write to you as a practicing midwife, working in the rural home birth setting, serving the community on Big Island since 2010. I have over 15 years experience attending births in many different settings, and have seen many diverse scenarios unfold during that time. I take my role as a maternity care provider very seriously, as unpredictable emergencies sometimes arise, and we need to respond in a quick and competent manner. I believe that proving a basic level of competency through meeting certification and licensure requirements helps keep midwives accountable and consistent in renewing and updating our knowledge and skills on a regular basis.

The requirements of licensure in the State of Hawaii are very do-able and reasonable in my opinion, and lends greatly to the safety of home birth in our community. I myself became a midwife through a combination of online schooling and hands-on apprenticeship, and I

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appreciate that our current licensure allows for others to become certified and licensed in midwifery through the same route. I am currently a preceptor for the North American Registry of Midwives and am committed to helping train students who want to obtain their CPM credentials through apprenticeship, as I truly believe midwives are the answer to our shortage of health care providers. I am also passionate about women being able to choose a care provider who can provide safe and respectful care to families who choose to birth at home, and feel that mandatory licensure is an important factor when it comes to proving competency and skills. I am continually learning and growing as a midwife through the requirements of my certification, which include a certain number of Continuing Education Units every couple of years, as well as bi-annual recertification of my CPR and NRP (Neonatal Resuscitation Program) skills. As much as I love learning, I am a busy mom of 3 kids in addition to being a midwife, and without these requirements I am not sure I would make it a priority without the accountability that certification and licensure provides.

In addition to my own feelings about this, I have many friends and acquaintances who work in our local hospital, and have heard some horrifying stories of home births that did not go well, with outcomes that could have easily been prevented with some basic skills from a competent care provider. This is the main reason I support licensure, because midwives should be providing safe care and ultimately saving lives in an emergency, not losing them due to a lack of knowledge and experience.

Thank you for your time,

*Dani Dougherty CPM, LM*

Certified Professional Midwife

Licensed Midwife

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:26:44 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Makalani Franco-Francis	Malama Na Pua O Haumea	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand by my previous written and oral testimony in SUPPORT Of HB955. I ask that the thousands of testimonies also in support of HB955 be heard.

Thank you for your time,

Makalani Franco-Francis

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:09:41 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aoki Birthing Care	Aoki Birthing Care	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**IN SUPPORT OF HB955**

We need access for humans to continue to become midwives! We need more midwives!

To midwife is to nurture, to love, to respect, to hold, to listen, to trust, to believe, to connect, to bond, to cry, to dine, to be invited, to share traditions, to be with mothers where they are at, in heart, in mind, in spirit. Traditional Midwifery is an art gained through direct life experience traveling 10 months with mothers and the families as part of the family, sharing stories and living traditions. We spend 1-2 hours per prenatal visit connecting and building a relationship with our families, educating them on how optimally they can prepare their bodies, mind and space for birth and postpartum. In the whole span of pregnancy alone, midwifery model of care provides an average of 18-36 hours of loving and informative care, compared to an ob medical model of care where one receives 2.5 hours total for the ENTIRE pregnancy. This is the paradigm trying to say they have the best care? Imagine a first time mother's experience, this is terrifying! Birth is intuitive, a big deal to the heart, mind and spirit of the motherbaby. Obstetrics and the medical model does not address the heart space, emotional space, spirit or soul level anything. It is not just spitting a baby out and they are good, now we are done with work. It is about supporting mothers/families in preparing their mental space, the physical space and emotional space to be ready, to heal, to find the courage and the strength to meet and move through one of the challenging times of their lives, yes every time they birth! It matters how the mother came to be a mother in all her decision making from choosing her midwife to where she wants to give birth to HER child, without coercion or manipulation or information kept from her, every step of the way for her well-being. Midwifing does this, this is tradition. Midwifery is about NOT controlling the mother and her choices, versus obstetrical/medical model of thinking that they know what is better for the mother.

Wiping out access for people to become traditionally trained midwives does not solve the maternal mortality rate data caused in hospitals in the U.S. The medical paradigm/hospital/ob care has the most neglected postnatal period in the U.S. resulting in maternal mortality rate that keep rising in the most developed nations in the world, cared for by "top notch" medical providers. And nobody is talking about it, addressing it, investigating it. We need more humans to not be traumatized or abused by the obstetrical field. Remember there is loving midwifery!

We need more midwives!

We need access for Hawaiians and those who wish to learn traditionally to be able to learn traditionally without criminalization. It is disrespectful to your ancestors who all birthed at home, attended by traditional midwives.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:48:14 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
M. Chong	Zen Den Midwifery	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Vote NO to HB955HD1.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:00:33 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
JB Entertainment Corporation	JB Entertainment Corporation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

We here at JB Entertainment Corporation STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955 HD1. I am writing this on behalf of the company and its entirety. Our founder and CEO was born and raised on Oahu and is constantly telling us about his home and culture. Of such amazing stories was one of how his daughter was born with the help of a traditional midwife. We were all amazed at what the state of Hawaii was doing especially in the ever tumultuous fight for womans rights.

When we heard that this right was possibly going to be taken away, we knew we had to do something about it. We are writing you now to offer our support in whatever way we can and to urge you that allot of very powerful eyes and ears are following this and urging you to do what you know is right. To PROTECT cultures, to protect a womans right to choose. We will continue to follow this bill until it is passed.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:43:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bonnie Marsh	UpCountry Doctor	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

please continue to support this bill, that continues to pave the way for traditional midwives to serve women in the privacy of their own home safely.

i practiced as a certified nurse midwife/naturopathic physician doing home births in san diego county for 20 years and safely delivered many babies.

unfortunately the medical community were not supportive of midwives, which was very stressful for me and my families.

let's make Hawaii a state that embraces midwifery and supports the choice of birth attendant and where they birth.

mahalo,

Dr. Bonnie Marsh

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:09:26 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Molly Peralta	Living Adjusted Family Wellness Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Molly Peralta, representing from Wailuku HI. I own a holistic health center that specializes in prenatal and pediatrics. Birth is potentially the largest imprinting event of our lives. Protecting our right to choose in birth, protects the next generation. This should be a non-negotiable considering Hawaii's indigenous roots. Please let the mother's take back control of their families and birthing choices.



North American  
Registry of Midwives

Providing Certification Standards  
For Certified Professional Midwives

**Ida Darragh, CPM, LM**  
*Executive Director*  
*Credentialing Specialist*  
Ida@narm.org

Feb 12, 2023

**Board of Directors**

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*Public Member*

*Executive Director*  
*Phone: 888-842-4784*  
*501-296-9769*  
*testing@narm.org*  
*www.narm.org*

Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Honolulu, HA 96813

To the Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee,

The North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) strongly urges support of HB 955\_HD1 to amend Act 32 of 2019 which licensed Certified Professional Midwives in Hawaii. NARM issues the credential, Certified Professional Midwife, which is the basis for licensure in 37 other states.

Act 32 of 2019 set standards for acquiring and maintaining a license to practice as a midwife. While this was a good start, there were several flaws in the bill. The primary flaw was that it identified only one route to certification without acknowledging the other routes, all of which require the same content in education, the same supervision of clinical skills, and passing the same national exam. All certification pathways assure the same knowledge and skills, and therefore should be acceptable as a qualification for licensure.

Another flaw in the 2019 law is that it only protected Traditional Birth Attendants until July 1, 2023, without a clear plan for what would be needed after that date. The new proposed bill remove the expiration date but clearly states what is required for those who meet those parameters.

I encourage your support for House Bill 955\_HD1.

Sincerely,



Ida Darragh  
Executive Director, North American Registry of Midwives

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:52:00 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dallas Fatseas	McCall Taylor LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My business and I are once again urging the state of Hawaii to support this bill. Midwifery is an important resource for families everywhere, and removing this support is not only in violation of the human right to choose alternative medical care, but is also deeply rooted in prejudice against the cultures midwifery and natural birth is rooted in. To take this away from the residents of Hawaii would cause extremely detrimental ripple effects such as increased stress of expectant mothers, lack of access to health care, and diminishing of diversity and culture. To the committees, officials, and administration involved with the passing of this bill, please support this bill.

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



**In SUPPORT of HB 955**

February 14, 2023

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair

**THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2023**

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 HB 955. It is imperative that the risk to mothers and babies created by the looming termination of legal traditional practice on July 1, 2023 be addressed. While far from a complete solution to the problems in the current law, this measure is an important step toward setting this matter right, and preventing a disaster resulting from sudden criminalization of many of the best clinically trained midwives in Hawai‘i. HB 955 is an absolute minimum protection for many birthing families to avoid being forced into underground or unassisted birth scenarios unprepared.

Please note that other problematic aspects of Act 32 need to be addressed as well; if this measure cannot be amended to protect deeply traditional practitioners, including extended family and culture bearers without realistic access to required forms or procedures, then this will need to be done in the future, as it is a serious matter of racial and cultural injustice for which the current law holds no effective mitigation.

Traditional midwives are keepers of some of the oldest and deepest aspects of ancient cultural and spiritual practice. These practices need protection, not persecution, and should be exempted outright. While HB 955 does not achieve this, it at least provides protection to clinically trained midwives who meet PEP standards, so that many families will not lose access to birth support entirely. This is important.

Birth 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, violent persecution, forced assimilation and Indigenous extermination, largely in the name of safety and modernization. This history must be turned.

While it does not rectify many of the problematic aspects of Act 32, HB 955 at least helps many who would otherwise be harmed by its effects. 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>

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:28:58 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Curnel Struempf,MW	Hawaii Midwifery Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

We are in strong support of HB955

The Hawai'i midwifery council was founded in 2015 by myself and Tara Compehos. We are the only two licensed midwives who have received 100% of our training in Hawai'i. We are PEP certified midwives. The PEP Certified Professional Midwives needs to be allowed to obtain a license. Our traditional birth attendants are needed as well. Please support HB955, and the birthing women of this state in having a choice of who attends them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rachel Curnel Struempf, LM, CPM

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:59:36 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katja Bajema	BEST Birth Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

We continue to offer full support of HB955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated, to match Oregon’s law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices.

BEST Birth Hawaii is a local pregnancy and breastfeeding center. We offer childbirth and breastfeeding education, doula support and various postpartum support services. We serve hundreds of families on Oahu every year. One of the main things we teach is about respectful care and informed decision making. There is no person in the world who will care more about the safety of this baby than the mother carrying him/her and that mother's partner. For some women the best and safest place to give birth is at home with the attendant of her choosing. As long as she is fully informed about that birth attendants training and experience she can make an informed choice that is best for her and her family. This bill will respect a woman's right to choose while ensuring she is informed.

It is in the context of respecting women and trusting them to make informed choices that are right for them that BEST Birth Hawaii strongly supports HB955 HD1.

Mahalo for your time and listening to the community.

Katja Bajema CD(DONA), ICCE, CLC

owner/managerr BEST Birth Hawaii

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:05:10 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Courtney hawkinson	Hawkinson designs	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

At home birth with wild wife support is ESSENTIAL to successful positive birth stories. Birth trauma has a lot to do with hospitals and doctors and environments not conducive to birth hormones. Our bodies were MADE to give birth and midwives believe that. I have had midwife care with both of my babies and I have delivered safely, quickly and left feeling EMPOWERED. Birth is not an illness and should not be treated as such. Being forced to birth with a team of doctors in a hospital setting is counterintuitive to how birth was designed and frankly HOSPITAL birth should be what's up for debate. Not natural child birth supported by a trained midwife.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:26:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chelsea Hemsley	Hemsley Familia GodTrust	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.





February 15, 2023

2 p.m.

Conference Room 329 and Via Videoconference

**To: House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce**

**Rep. Mark M. Nakashima, Chair**

**Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**

**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: HB955 HD1 — RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES

***Comments Only***

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [HB955 HD1](#), which would exempt birth attendants practicing before July 1, 2025 from licensure requirements.

This measure correctly recognizes the harm caused by overbroad licensing laws. When states require a laundry list of mandatory training courses and exams for people who simply wish to make a living, they often burden the most vulnerable individuals who cannot afford to spend time or money obtaining a license.

Should this measure fail, Hawaii's birth attendants will surely be another victim of poorly written regulations. These individuals are trained in traditional birthing practices and should not be subject to the same requirements that licensed midwives are. These requirements can include \$2,130 in fees, 730 hours of training, two years of education and passing an exam.<sup>1</sup>

For lower-income birth attendants, these license requirements pose a massive barrier to entry. If the current exemption is not extended, many birth attendants would simply leave the profession instead of applying for a license. The result would be fewer birth attendants available for mothers and higher costs for the services of those who remain.

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<sup>1</sup> ["Hawaii Occupational Licensing,"](#) Institute for Justice, 2022.

Anyone worried that unlicensed birth attendants might be untrained and might harm the mother or the baby should note that the bill as written contains limitations on how birth attendants may interact with the families. These limitations are currently law; this bill does not change them.

Regarding licensing in general, I urge members of this committee to consider exempting other occupations from strict licensing laws. A 2022 study by the national Institute for Justice found that Hawaii's licenses for lower-skilled occupations are some of the most burdensome in the country.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, there is little evidence that licensing serves a worthwhile purpose.

One study of licensing among medical professionals found that "licensing is associated with restricted labor supply, an increased wage of the licensed occupation, rents, increased output prices, and no measurable effect on output quality."<sup>3</sup>

We commend the committee for considering this bill and any other measures that would make it easier for individuals to practice their trades without undue interference.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Sean Nicholson and Carol Propper, "[Chapter Fourteen — Medical Workforce.](#)" in "Handbook of Health Economics, Vol. 2," Elsevier, B.V., 2012, p. 885.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:15:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Connie Conover	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony for the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

Hearing Wednesday February 15, 2023

Representative Mark Nakashima, Chair and Representative Jackson Sayama, Vice Chair

I am writing to oppose HB 955

I support the current law recognizing the licensure of Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM) and Certified Professional Midwives (CPM). Both types of midwives are required to complete rigorous educational programs and are nationally certified and licensed to practice here in the state of Hawaii. The CNMs here in Hawaii most commonly attend births in hospitals. The CPMs attend births in the home.

I am a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) licensed here in Hawaii since 1999. I have attended close to 1800 births, many at 2 major hospitals here on Oahu.

I continue to support women's options for birth but continue to be challenged by the complications that can quickly arise that can cause life threatening consequences to the mother and/or newborn.

Several years ago while working night shift at the hospital, we received a home birth transport due to the baby having a dangerously low heart rate. When they arrived to our labor and delivery unit an immediate Cesarean Section was done to try to save the baby. The baby died soon after the birth, the mom severely hemorrhaged requiring multiple units of blood, transfer to the ICU, and did survive. I keep thinking that had she been at the hospital for labor we could have saved that baby's life, and the families heart ache.

Additionally I spent many years of training to be come a nationally certified and licensed midwife (CNM), 4 years undergraduate and 2 additional years for a masters degree. I am challenged by the clarity for the public. I call myself a midwife - but so do the non licensed people who are attending births at home.

After reading past testimony, I clearly see that the families of Hawaii want the option to choose who cares for them during their pregnancy and where they labor and give birth to their babies. They will have options to make the best decisions for themselves, I just hope they are safe ones.

Let us keep the moms and babies of Hawaii safe by having licensed providers attending our mothers.

I am also a member of the Hawaii Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives.

Thank you

Connie Conover CNM

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 3:00:42 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Minton	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sakayama and Committee Members:

I am writing to OPPOSE HB955HD1 relating to licensure for midwives and I encourage the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce to **vote NO on HB955HD1**.

HRS 457J already protects consumers and commerce by requiring a minimum educational requirement of a GED and a certificate in midwifery, and requires mandatory licensure beginning July 1, 2023. The education that is required for HRS 457J as it currently stands in law is achievable in Hawaii and should remain the minimum requirement for licensed midwives. All licensed autonomous primary health care providers in Hawaii require more than a GED as a their minimum education. HRS 457J requiring a minimum of a certificate in addition to a minimum GED is in accordance with healthcare educational standards, and midwifery educational standards. Accredited education for certified professional midwives has been available for 22 years; it is not new.

HB955HD1 removes protections for consumers and commerce by continuing exemption for practicing midwifery without a license. This allows for midwifery practice to be sold to consumers for \$5K-\$10K for each pregnancy and birth in a cash based business, without requiring providers to prove any competencies or skills in midwifery, and with no complaint process for consumers if they receive negligent care.

I urge you to **vote NO on HB955HD1** to continue to provide protections for consumers and commerce.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Le'a Minton, MSN, APRN, CNM, IBCLC, IMH-E

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:19:16 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jan ferguson	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sakayama, and Committee Members:

I am a licenced midwife in Hawaii and I am opposed to HB955HD1.

I am aware that most of the testimony the committee will receive for this will be in support. There appears to be a lot of confusion and misinformation about licensure for midwives, who are midwives, and what the current midwifery law is about.

In 2019 the Hawaii State Legislature passed into law HRS457J, licensure for midwives. The purpose of the law, like all licensure for health care professions, is to protect the public from negligence and harm.

Contrary to a lot of testimony being given, women in Hawaii can have their babies anywhere they want, with whoever they want to attend them. Nothing about the current midwifery law is prohibitive of women birthing the way they want and having whoever they want with them.

You will hear testimony that women have a right to body autonomy, that birth is a normal (frequently referred to as sacred) function of a woman's body and the state has no right to be involved in how a woman chooses to birth.

I agree and would not support a bill or law that took away those rights.

You will hear testimony that the public prefers traditional, culturally appropriate midwives. The implication is that licensed midwives are prohibited from implementing traditional/cultural practices. They are not.

What the law does say is that those birth attendants charging for their services and advertising as Midwives, using modern medical equipment and carrying medications, be educated and tested to minimum standards.

The people who are represented by HB955HD1, who are requesting exemption from licensure, refer to themselves as "other undefined traditional midwives"

Perhaps a fair description is people with informal/apprenticeship/self led training who choose not to credential for personal, philosophical, religious or political reasons.

The bill states that a credentialing pathway through the North American Registry of Midwives known as the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) was omitted from the law as a credentialing option. The ask is that it now be allowed. Nowhere in the bill does it state the exempted parties agree to work toward meeting minimum standards and commit to acquiring credentialing through PEP or seek to acquire a midwifery license. It seems safe to assume that some or all want PERMANENT EXEMPTION from licensure.

There are a small group of women birth attendants in Hawaii who are pushing for and who will benefit from this bill. Even if we were to assume that all of them are well trained, experienced, capable of providing prenatal care and safely attending home births, does the state want to pass a bill just for them? Once passed anyone can say they too are “traditional birth attendants”. There will be no deterrent for untrained birth attendants and midwives who have lost their license for malpractice in other states coming to Hawaii and setting up a practice as “traditional birth attendants”.

In less than three years, since licensure, 28 midwives have become licensed in Hawaii. They are autonomous health care providers who care for women and babies during pregnancy birth and postpartum.

Is there any other healthcare professional that can choose to opt-out of licensure while providing healthcare to the public? The state is being asked to agree that in this one healthcare profession we don't need to protect the public or provide a means for accountability.

If a vaguely defined, unregulated group of "other types of birth attendants" are exempt from licensure then licensure is moot. Licensure becomes voluntary. Many, if not all of the licensed midwives, myself included, will not renew our license. This is a huge step backward for the profession of Midwifery.

Please consider public safety and recourse. Do not support this bill.

Thank you,

Jan Ferguson, LM

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:20:25 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alex Amey	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hi Chair, vice chair, and committee members, my name is Alex Amey and I'm testifying in strong support of HB955 /Resolution 23-28. I am a labor and delivery nurse at Maui memorial medical center and a student midwife at Georgetown University. I personally support this bill to expand access to midwifery education/accreditation and acknowledge my privilege that has made it possible for me to become a CNM (certified nurse midwife) that many others living here do not have equal access to. There are many barriers to becoming a midwife here in Hawaii, especially for people of color including indigenous and native Hawaiians. There is a clear discrimination embedded in HRS457-J that adversely impacts individuals from marginalized communities from being able to become Licensed Midwives and provide and access culturally congruent safe midwifery care to their own communities. If the state of Hawaii is making requirements for midwives, we need to provide equal and unbiased access to education and acknowledgement of indigenous practices that are the foundation of midwifery in Hawaii. I stand for equal access to becoming a midwife, as well as acknowledgment of traditional apprenticeship pathways for the continuation of cultural practices of health and healing that have been practiced for thousands of years. I strongly support for HB955 is one step that can help us to right this past wrong and move towards diversity, equity and inclusion in our entry level midwifery workforce across Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Alex Amey, SNM, SWNP



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:36:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Merrily Daly	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Chair: Mark Naksima

Vice Chair: Jackson Sayama

and Committee Members

My name is Merrily Daly. I am an RN since 1977, a Certified Professional Midwife 1992 and a Licensed Midwife in Hawaii since it became legal 7/2020. I have delivered over 3000 babies mostly at home and some in the hospital in Hawaii in my 40+ years I have practiced here. I went through one of the first programs that started up in 1973 in Northern California working with an OB, Pediatrician and Midwife to revive midwifery and make home birth safe and legal.

I am also a Preceptor for anyone that is working on becoming a qualified LM in Hawaii

I am against HB 955. Here are my analogies and reasons why

1. Would you get in an airplane with a novice pilot who maybe got instruction from another pilot but never was tested on what they actually knew nor had further instructions on all the things that could go wrong? I certainly wouldn't! Not to say they couldn't do the job but what if it was the unlucky day when something went wrong and the said pilot didn't know how to handle it.

In essence that's what would happen if HB 955 passed and women could hang a shingle and say they were experienced midwives (however without ever being tested on what they knew or didn't know.) If you are a first time mom seeking out a midwife, you don't even know what questions to ask them to determine if that is exactly what you are looking for.

2. This group has had 4 years since the law started, to come up with a plan of how they could fit in legally, yet they still want an exemption and no accountability permanently.

3. This bill has nothing to do with Hawaiian Culture Healing Practices that are protected under Papa Ola Lokahi

4. The women/men seeking this exemption are saying they are “other UNDEFINED traditional birth attendants” which could be anyone wanting to say they only used natural herbs and did not do any invasive procedures during the prenatal/antenatal/postpartum period. Any midwife that goes to a home birth and DOES NOT carry drugs for hemorrhage at a minimum is putting the family and community at risk

5. I understand that women want to choose their midwife....this isn't about this....this is to say they just could not charge for their services, they could not say they were an actual midwife, they could not hang a sign for services and they could not carry medications. They would have to state where they received their informal training and give pregnant couples enough information for them to decide if that is the type of birth they want.

6. This group is also stating there is no pathway for them to get licensure here in Hawaii when many programs now are online and give ample time to get through the program. There are preceptors here as well to test their qualifications and their knowledge. These students may have to travel a few times in the course of the program however there are grants available to many who apply that have a good reason that want to become a midwife in Hawaii.

7. 90% of births do not need to be attended by anyone...it's the 10% that have the problems that need a licensed midwife at home to care for them and make the right call.

Let this group go through a process where their core competencies are tested and get a certification like the PEP but until it is clear they should not be EXEMPT until IT IS DONE. I feel that July 2023 should be the deadline. It will make this group work harder to put something in place, so our community families are not put at risk. Please do not give them another 2 years, they were given 4 already.

8. The Licensed Midwives here have worked to bring about collaborative care with the medical community; allowing this exemption creates confusion and undermines our progress plus it will bring in more and more unlicensed midwives who have had problems in other states.

I hope you will consider what I've said and how passing this bill could endanger our homebirth community.

That is why I am against HB 955.

Respectfully,

Merrily Daly LM, CPM, RN



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:25:37 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara DiGrazia	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

I am a mom of two healthy children born at home and ask that you please support HB955 and continue the tradition of homebirthing in Hawai'i to flourish, allowing a family decide who is qualified to attend thier most intimate moments.

Thank you,

Sara DiGrazia, Psy.D.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:29:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GIANNY N NAVAS	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am writing to you today as a student midwife, who is undergoing the PEP route through NARM, and learning under traditional midwives. My name is Gianni Navas, and I support HB955. We must keep traditional midwifery alive, because there are native Hawaiian women who seek it. We must keep it alive because there are women in general who prefer a traditional, holistic lifestyle, which includes healthcare. You don't force people who undergo Ayurvedic treatment and care to go to Western medicine to solve their high blood pressure issue. They will most likely be prescribed medication to control their blood pressure, when in reality this person wants to solve the root problem, naturally, and energetically, and this is their choice.

You don't send nurse-midwives (who attend 4 years of nursing school, and a masters in midwifery to attend hospital births), to a traditional midwifery apprenticeship to learn about how herbs can treat a postpartum hemorrhage. Why not? Because the hospital will not use these herbs. Instead, they will immediately resort to pharmaceuticals, and that's okay. So, how are traditional midwives expected to go to a MEAC school, and learn about all the ways to "practice correctly" when they will never use these methods? Who says there is a "better" way to practice? Better to whom? Using pharmaceutical drugs to prevent bleeding might be better for one woman, but not a preferred method for another. There are multiple ways to achieve the same goal. It is ultimately all about the patient's care, and how they want to be treated. The most basic example... this is why we can choose between an M.D., and an N.D. So, why can't we choose between a traditional midwife, and a medical midwife?

It is great that women have an option to go to the hospital and choose Western medicine. Makes sense, we live in a Western society. But in this diverse country we are free to choose what fits our lifestyles best, what is the best choice for our family and friends, and this shows in all different forms of medicine.

Birth is not medicine. It is a PHYSIOLOGIC process that has been happening since the beginning of mankind. It is not the same as orthopedics (we all have the same bones), cardio (all hearts work the same), or general surgery (our organs are in the same place and have same function). "Labor and delivery" is different for every woman, and women can not be limited to textbook data and research ALONE. We all give birth differently, some take longer, some less, some go at 38 weeks, some at 41 weeks. Birth is not a science, and traditional midwives don't see it this way. We see it as a beautiful, intimate, process that can be trusted not feared. Yet, we are prepared for the unexpected, being able to correct this in traditional methods. We know how to sit on our hands, trust and listen to the women, care for them, all while being ready for anything

ill to occur. This is something OB-GYN's, nurse midwives, and some licensed midwives don't do (and this is okay, because there are women who want this and they deserve it).

The PEP route gets the same end goal as the MEAC route when it comes to becoming certified. More women (who do not consider themselves traditional midwives) would be willing to become licensed in Hawai'i if they could do the PEP route. Therefore, Hawai'i would have more midwives overall! More women to be supported. Both MEAC, and PEP students at the end of the day have to sit for the same NARM entry exam. So what does it matter? If the PEP student can pass, then doesn't this qualify them?

I am a PEP student, and I am learning from both, medical minded midwives, and traditional midwives because I believe in learning a BALANCE. Then, when it is my time, I will choose the style I would like to practice. I am leaning towards the traditional style, after what I have seen from medical midwives (it is just not how I would like to support women, and it is not the clientel I attract).

Please pass this bill to give mothers OPTIONS for their care! Thank you so much for this opportunity.

## **OPPOSITION TO HB955HD1**

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Representative Mark Nakashima, Chair  
Representative Jackson Sayama, Vice Chair  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Berentania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

From:  
Melissa W. Chong, LM, CPM  
Zen Den Midwifery

Time: Thirty-Second Legislature Regular Session of 2023  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 2:00PM

Dear Representative Mark Nakashima, Representative Jackson Sayama and committee members:

I **oppose** HB955HD1 Relating to Chapter 457-J. Supporting this will in turn be supporting the practice and expansion of people practicing as autonomous healthcare providers without offering the appropriate protections and oversight for the consumer.

The CPC is entrusted with overseeing and guiding protections for the public. This measure opens our state to become a “safe haven” for individuals (that are not local or providing care here currently), that have been expelled from being able to obtain licensure due to cases of negligence and malpractice in other states. States that require minimum, measurable, core competencies not are appealing to people willing to practice within states with consumer protections and standards.

Midwifery is an art and a calling; I agree that all these things are true. But I also know from many years of working with moms and families that skills are needed in the chance that things don't go the way nature intends. Skills, equipment, and medications are basic health care requirements to tend women properly and safely during not only pregnancy and birth, but throughout their lifetime. There are thriving organizations whose entire goals are to increase healthcare standards by increasing knowledge and equipment to underserved areas. This is supported and funded because of the information and data readily available about the increased maternal and infant morbidity and mortality in areas where attendants have not been formally trained to recognize how to use the information gathered from the medical equipment, and in areas that have no access to this equipment or education.

Currently, here in Hawaii the Birth Attendants (5 ppl) who are seeking recognition are using medical equipment, carrying medications, and utilizing tools. Requiring that people aspiring to

be autonomous healthcare providers attend a standardized education alongside the traditional apprenticeship model, is a basic safety measure and a bare minimum requirement to ensuring public protection.

The metaphorical thought and literal presence of a cultural attendant utilizing standard medical equipment such as blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, doppler ultrasound, urine strips, suturing materials and pharmacological antihemorrhagic medications proves the ability for both cultural care and modernized medicine to live side by side. I am just asking that you require this same practitioner to be required to have a standardized education on how to use the equipment and the information gathered.

**Accredited education is obtainable while living in Hawai'i** and costs \$4-7.5K per year for 3 years (less than the cost to go to UH Manoa). All of the online schools offer payment plans, most offer federal funding and all offer some form of scholarship opportunity. Out of the 8 with online programs, 4 can be done completely online and all of the schools encourage you to get your preceptorships done where you live.

HRS 457J requires accredited education for licensure. Currently, there are licensed midwives that have completed these programs while living in Hawaii. This can be done entirely in Hawaii with zero travel. The same preceptors or mentors used for the PEP process can be used in conjunction with an accredited program. The main difference is the 'bookwork' or didactic portion is not self-study, but is done online through a MEAC accredited school.

In a position statement by the certifying body for CPM's (those who did the PEP process and the ones who attended a MEAC school), **NARM**, in conjunction with both the International Confederation of Midwives educational standards and the US Midwifery Education Regulation & Association- **US MERA, which included all national midwifery education accrediting bodies, accredited certifying bodies, professional organizations and the International Center for Traditional Childbearing, recommend accredited midwifery education as the minimum standard for licensure as of January 1, 2020.** Ensuring a baseline standardized education for midwifery. HRS 457J was written to current standards and any adjustments would be a step backwards.

HB955HD1 would remove public protections for consumers and allow an open number of people to practice without minimum education and training in midwifery while utilizing modern tools as autonomous healthcare providers.

I respectfully ask that you see past the confusion about what this is truly about and make the choice to support core competencies and consumer protections by **VOTING NO on HB955HD1.**

Melissa W. Chong LM, CPM







My name is Sovereign and I am the 12 year old HB 955 was named after, Sovereign's law.

When i grow up i want to be a traditional midwife, also known as a birth attendant. But if birth attendants go illegal in four months, I won't be allowed too.

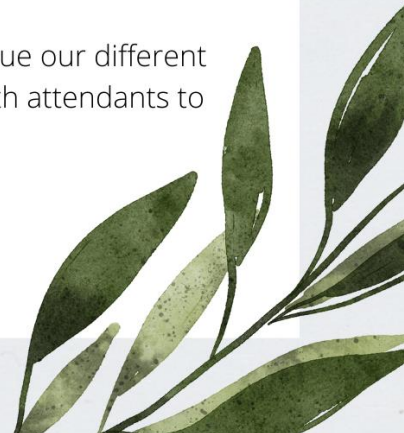
instead, I will have to go to the mainland and I cannot learn my own cultures and traditions. I will be forced to learn the western ways of birth even though my own people have been practicing from the beginning . They are viewed as though they are not valuable to the community. Please don't say I need to get a western education in addition to my own culture's training.

If this does not pass, anyone with other cultural practices and traditions in birth are seen as worthless and replaceable.

i am not worthless. My traditions are not replaceable. My people view birth different from the teachings in the mainland .

Please help support me as I am here to speak for the next generation of women whose cultural practices will be erased.

Please help preserve, save, and please value our different practices by supporting a pathway for birth attendants to continue to practice.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:22:18 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Clarissa Lee	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:49:27 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To: Chair Nakashima  
Vice Chair Sayama  
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Re: HB 955

Thank you for this hearing today for HB 955. Your work for the safety of families and solutions out of this Maternal Health Crisis we are currently in. I stand in full support of HB 955 and I ask you to please support HB 955 to protect Midwifery and Birthing families options. HB 955 protects a families right to culturally appropriate care to choose a Traditional Birth attendants and the Portfolio Evaluation Process, which allows a person to sit for the national accredited test to become a Certified Professional Midwife. HB955 continue the possibility of Global Midwifery education and training to be legal in Hawaii. Every Culture has variations of Midwifery please do not force White American Assimilation of care as the standard. All cultural Midwives wisdom should be welcomed in Hawai'i as it once was. We see Maui has passed Res 23-28 that fully supports HB 955 being passed into law within HRS 457.

Reproductive choice in pregnancy regulation is well supported in Hawai'i. Access to birth control in all forms is available to most residents of Hawai'i. Within options and dedicated people, working to create more access and normalization of Abortion and Birth control support though out the islands, we protect Health Care choices. Midwives are included in reproductive Health access and should be available for every aspect of Reproductive care. What does a collaborative Maternal Health care team look like, and how does it function? How are laws, regulation, and education set up as barriers against Midwives as standard of care? We can see as you look through Historical Documents of all communities, in Hawai'i and America, and there were thousands of Midwives prior to the 1920. If these laws were created to make people safe, why is America as a 'First world' Developed nation; has the least Midwives, highest maternal mortality and morbidity, most expensive healthcare, with highest intimate partner violence, and white domination in Maternal Health. HRS 457-J without exemptions will continue to enforce assimilation of culture and lack of healthcare standards for birthing people. HB 955 will keep the pathway open for a safer future for the well being of Society. This is not the time to go backwaters in Reproductive Justice and Reproductive Health. Social Determinate's must be truly address at to move forward for a new future.

Criminalization of Midwifery is a long standing issue in America and Hawai'i based on racism and colonization. Governor Josh Green, declared in the past, that regulation of Midwifery

is “an issue of autonomy and manifest destiny” This concept of Manifest destiny in regards Midwifery law, HRS 457 without exemptions seems to be an honest analysis of Manifest Destiny. Given humans have been giving birth with Midwives from the beginning of time, it would seem that the moral compass would include the Sovereignty of Birth. A Moral Compass for humanity live in reviving Indigenous birth practices, Honoring our babies birth rights, amplifying Traditional Birth Attendants and Midwives of Culture, Uncovering the continual neglect and harm of the Medical Industrial Complex, Exposing the role of the patriarch using birthing bodies for exploitation with economic authority, and immediate focus of Midwifery as primary care for all birthing people. The Sheppard Towner Act never served for the health of society, 100 years later we are in a disaster and criminalizing Midwives in Hawai‘i will not be a solution. Collaborative care in all fields of Maternal and Infant health need to be grown. This includes Traditional Midwives wisdom and value being included and recognized as valuable in a healthy society. Frameworks, education, and regulations such as National Aboriginal Council of Midwives, show the variations of professional and credible Midwifery regulations based on an Indigenous, human centered standard of care.

For centuries Black and Indigenous Midwives maintained excellence in maternal health, yet became almost extinct in Hawai‘i and America because of White supremacy. Midwifery offers protection and solutions to Maternal/Infant long term health and bonding. Health care starts in the womb and should protect wellness for the pregnant person and the one inside that womb. Midwifery support trickles out to the family, community, and larger society. HRS 457 would make one pathway for Midwives confined to only 8 MEAC accredited schools, dominated in the complete absence of education outside of standardized practice. If these regulations are for ‘safety’ and the solution, why do we still only have 2% of Midwives in the nation that is the most dangerous nation to give birth in. As we see in Maui there are 5 white American CPM’s, that is it. If this law goes through these White American Midwives will be all we have and they do not serve most of the island. The truth is that all these regulations have only done is cause erasure. Laws of criminalization of Health care practitioners create cultural genocide of rooted community Birth Attendants in Hawai‘i and America. It is the human compassion and cutlural brilliance of care that is missing from this standardized model. Traditional Midwifery is the solution. Collaborative care is the solution. This battle over who should be Midwives is appalling when the MIC is offering some of the most harmful care out there. If a healthy society is the goal, looking at how we care for life from the womb matters. Can we ask for more than just capitalistic survival of the fittest based on racist domination and coercion? The scope of care through a traditional lens is surrounded in safety and accountability through time. The standard scope of practice in Current Midwifery laws are guided by a Euro-American Medical standard of care. There are ways of establishing scopes of practice for birthing people that are in cultural and human alignment. Indigenous solutions to Indigenous physiology should be established equally as standard of care in all systems for a sustainable future.

I ask you to please support HB 955 to protect Midwifery and Birthing families options. HB 955 protects a families right to culturally appropriate care to choose a Traditional Birth attendants and the Portfolio Evaluation Process, which allows a person to sit for the national accredited test to become a Certified Professional Midwife. These essential exceptions continue the possibility of Global Midwifery education and training to be legal in Hawaii. We are here for you, any

documents, research you need in seeing why HB 955 is essential to HRS 457-J, please ask we will bring it!

Thank you so very much for all you do for Hawai'i future,

Pahnelopi McKenzie

Mahalo for this opportunity to address our representatives regarding HB955 Draft Legislation.

I am speaking as an individual, a mother of two, both born at home with the assistance of licensed midwives in the state of New York., I am a third generation devotee of the Hawai'ian Islands, but have only recently moved here in August 2022, as it is now possible for me to practice midwifery due to HRS 457J. I worked at the height of the pandemic in New York City, practicing per the guidelines of my licensing board American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB). I am a Certified Midwife (CM). I will be the first CM in the State of Hawai'i. HRS 457-J needs further revision, beyond what this bill proposes, as CM's scope of practice is equivalent to Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM) & HRS 457 - J inaccurately equates Certified Professional Midwives and Traditional Midwives or Traditional Birth Attendants.

I speak to address all of the stakeholders, here. I speak because I have yet to hear testimony that acknowledges the whole picture. It has been recognized that legislators seek to regulate health care for the safety of the public and to provide access to that safe care. Hopefully, there has been an abundance of testimony from the public that expresses the diversity of needs of the Hawai'ian families. As this bill stands, the only care that is being considered is antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum care. Some families prefer to receive this care in a hospital setting, some prefer out-of-hospital, in a birth center or at home. The third stakeholders in this conversation are the practitioners. There is also the stakeholders of insurance companies, government assisted health coverage, and malpractice providers. I wish to address the complexity of the careproviders, as I feel this has not been fully addressed.

Midwifery, as an ancient art and science, goes back to the beginning of humanity. There have always been caregivers in family health and women's health. Today, in Hawai'i, there are four distinct pathways, that are self regulated. There are the Traditional Midwives or Birth Attendants. There are Certified Professional Midwives. There are Certified Midwives. There are Certified Nurse Midwives. It is important that you as legislators familiarize yourself with all of these and as legislation is amended, these four pathways are recognized and regulated (or deemed exempt). I hope to be able to have time to speak more in-depth to the committee on Wednesday.

Mahalo for your time,  
Margaret Ragen, LM, CM, CLC  
*Ka'awaloa (Captain Cook), HI*

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:22:15 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
adaure ezinne dawson	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for this opportunity to testify,

I am a CPM, certified professional midwife, I trained to become a CPM under traditional midwives and began my training before this midwifery legislation was adopted. I attended about 100 births before I felt knowledgeable and prepared enough to sit for the national exam. I was trained on how to listen to a baby in utero, during the prenatal period and specifically during labor, I was trained to know what is normal and what is out of normal range for the fetus heart rate, I was trained to observe and asses maternal blood loss during and after labor, I was trained to know what is normal and what is not normal, I was trained to respond with herbal remedies and with alternate western medicines. I know how to use both types medications, natural and pharmaceutical. I also know how to listen to a laboring person and hear their needs and communicate the importance of transferring to a hospital if the need to do so arises. It is not always the easiest decision for a woman who chose to birth at home to transfer to the hospital but it is helpful when a relationship has been developed over time for there to be trust, thus making that decision easier.

What makes the decision to go to the hospital harder for a laboring family? Lack of compassion by the hospital receiving staff, lack of training for the EMS staff that is called in to transport, criticism, misjudgment of the birth attendant leading to conflict and a host of other reasons. I submit that the issue is not in the lack of training of home birth practitioners but rather the lack of communication in transfer protocols from home to hospital

The birth attendants I have worked with (and I have worked with many) all have the same goal a healthy mom and healthy baby. We maintain certifications and trainings and protocols to ensure safety at the births we attend to. We plan together with our families what to do in an emergency situation but we do not know what to expect from the receiving providers and thus a broken link in the communication.

The breakdown may be because most home birth attendants have such few transports to the hospital so when it is time to actually utilize additional support and that support is not consistent or compassionate it creates a rift and brings challenges that make it harder on our families and babies. When time is of the essence we dont have time to critique a mothers choice to birth at home coupled with the dismissal of the provider who can give valuable information to the receiving practitioner. Let me reiterate that these situations are rare but it seems these situations are the ones that truly need to be highlighted and addressed because you will not here from the



birth attendants and families that had beautiful and successful birth outcome, unless of course you challenge the ability for these families to choose the provider of their choice and threaten to criminalize the people that truly made them feel safe during their birth.

I strongly encourage the passing of this bill HB955 because it is NOT the providers of home birth that don't have standards causing problems. It is more likely the poor communication that needs to be addressed. HB955 ensures access to a variety of care providers and women and families are intelligent enough to choose a provider that best suits their needs. I know that several families have declined care with me due to my lack of license even though I have the skill set yet my inability to carry potential life saving meds (despite being trained to use them) is concerning. On the other hand families have chosen me to support them as a traditional birth attendant based off of what they know and how they feel about me.

Moms WILL continue to choose to birth their babies at home with or without support. My worry is if you reduce the amount of people who are able to support families during their birth what will you say when you hear about a loss that happened due to lack of assistance. Chances are that individual has not attended hundreds or thousands of births to know that maybe what they are experiencing is not normal. It may be too late so what next? Are you going to force every woman to birth in a hospital? Absolutely not. Address the issue not by eliminating providers but by making sure the birth attendants remain legal.

Thank you,

Adaure Ezinne Dawson

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:38:48 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Salzer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:49:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexa Helge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

**I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955**, especially preserving and extending the exemption for traditional birth attendants.

This is important for several reasons:

**1. Traditional birth attendants provide care to those in remote areas**, where access to a hospital is not only limited, but too far a distance to travel while in labor. They travel to YOU and are able to care for you in the comfort and safety of your own home.

**2. Traditional birth attendants provide care to all, regardless of financial status.**

**3. Traditional birth attendants preserve and maintain cultural practices**, which is vitally important to cultural identity (Hawaiian or otherwise) and the continuation of a culture.

**4. Traditional birth attendants are competent care providers.** They are trained by their kupuna and through apprenticeship with other midwives and birth attendants. They are knowledgeable in childbirth, but they also know when circumstances dictate that their client be transferred to a hospital.

I am not a mother yet, but I hope to be in the caring hands of traditional birth attendants, without fear of prosecution in our own homeland, when I become one.

Mahalo

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:14:43 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shandhini Raidoo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist and I have been providing care in Hawaii for almost 8 years. I have been trained extensively in responding to obstetric emergencies and I know firsthand how quickly a normal labor and delivery process can become an emergency. Maternal mortality in the US is rising and women of color are more likely to experience severe complications or death in the labor and delivery process. It is imperative that we have trained, licensed professionals attend births to optimize the health of Hawaii's families. I strongly urge you to OPPOSE HB 955 and hold Hawaii's birth attendants to a standard that protects families in our state.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Shandhini Raidoo, MD, MPH

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:59:56 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aki Malone	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 2:40:36 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Gonce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 3:18:57 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a homebirth mama of two thriving keiki I am strongly in support of this bill. I want ALL birthing people to continue to have the freedom I had to choose who I wanted at my side during the most magnificent and miraculous time of my life. Birthing is one of the most fundamental of our basic human rights and we deserve full autonomy in choice surrounding this experience.

Please support HB955.

Mahalo,

Shannon Matson

Hawai'i Island Resident

DATE: February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

To: Senate Health & Human Services Committee and Commerce & Consumer Protection Committees

From: Ronnie Texeira, MD, FACOG

Re: HB 955 – Relating to birth attendants practicing on or before 7/1/2025 from licensure requirements, under certain conditions. Expands qualifications for licensure to include the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process. Effective 6/30/3000.

Position: Strongly Oppose

I am an OBGYN (Obstetrician/Gynecologist) who trained in Hawaii and has been practicing here for almost 13 years. I live and practice in Kaneohe, Oahu. I am writing in opposition of HB955. I believe this bill will affect the health safety of the birthing people of Hawaii. Rigorous requirements for state licensure are required for so many professions in Hawaii. Midwives providing out of hospital births should be held to the standards as outlined by our current midwife licensure law. While it is always a person's choice where and how to have their baby, I strongly feel that these choices need to be educated and informed. Patients need to be offered choices that not only make them feel safe but are actually safe. HB955 will not make out of hospital birth safer for birthing parents.

Thank you,

Ronnie Texeira, MD, FACOG

OBGYN



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 4:44:17 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Babatunji Heath	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I continue to offer full support of HB 955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated, to match Oregon’s law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices. We would also like to offer additional comments to clarify some misconceptions that have been brought up in previous testimony and questions from legislators:

Point # 1: On July 1, 2023, birth attendants with different cultural skills and practices will become illegal unless we pass new legislation this year. If they become illegal it will create a dangerous problem in the community where families will be unable to find a practitioner to serve their needs. We are already seeing this problem NOW as birth attendants, uncertain of their future after June 2023 aren't taking clients, and there are not enough skilled providers available to serve the community after this time.

Point #2: Traditionally trained birth attendants have standards, detailed disclosure forms required by the state and have no documented history of bad outcomes

Point #3: Traditionally- trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and in demand. There was unanimous agreement with all 12 members of the 2019 Home Birth Task Force Report that Traditional midwives exist in Hawaii, they are in demand by their community, and are recognized in numerous states in the US and globally.

The 2/8/2023 Committee Report from the House Health & Human Services Committee stated: “Your Committee finds that traditionally-trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and

preferred by some consumers, and that the type of birth attendant utilized at a birth should be the birthing person's choice.”

The Maui County Council unanimously passed Resolution 23-28 on 2/3/23 URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO ENACT A STATUTE PERMANENTLY EXEMPTING BIRTH ATTENDANTS FROM STATE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS.

Point #4 It is a woman's right to choose with whom and where she feels most safe to birth

For these reasons, we are respectfully requesting that the CPC Committee pass HB955, and recommend they remove the Birth Attendant expiration date of July 1, 2025, as the Maui County Council requested.

Sincerely,

Babatunji Heath

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:02:14 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lori kimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I continue to offer full support of HB955 HD1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated, to match Oregon's law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices.

On July 1, 2023, birth attendants with different cultural skills and practices will become illegal unless we pass new legislation this year. As a 4th generation Hawaii resident and a home birth practitioner for over 30 years and 3000 babies, I am already seeing this as a community catastrophe, as birth attendants, uncertain of their future are not taking clients on after June 2023 and myself along with the other skilled home birth practioners on Oahu cannot meet the needs of the community! These birth attendants play an extremely valuable role in our home birth community! They deserve our respect and support!

Traditionally trained birth attendants have standards, detailed disclosure forms required by the state and have no documented history of bad outcomes! Please pass HB955 HD1

Mahalo,

Dr Lori Kimata ND

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:00:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tori Saludez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:04:15 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
dawn alba noble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I continue to offer full support of HB955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated, to match Oregon’s law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices. We would also like to offer additional comments to clarify some misconceptions that have been brought up in previous testimony and questions from legislators:

Point # 1: On July 1, 2023, birth attendants with different cultural skills and practices will become illegal unless we pass new legislation this year. If they become illegal it will create a dangerous problem in the community where families will be unable to find a practitioner to serve their needs. We are already seeing this problem NOW as birth attendants, uncertain of their future after June 2023 aren't taking clients, and there are not enough skilled providers available to serve the community after this time.

Point #2: Traditionally trained birth attendants have standards, detailed disclosure forms required by the state and have no documented history of bad outcomes

Point #3: Traditionally trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and in demand. There was unanimous agreement with all 12 members of the 2019 Home Birth Task Force Report that Traditional midwives exist in Hawaii, they are in demand by their community, and are recognized in numerous states in the US and globally.

The 2/8/2023 Committee Report from the House Health & Human Services Committee stated: “Your Committee finds that traditionally-trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and

preferred by some consumers, and that the type of birth attendant utilized at a birth should be the birthing person's choice.”

The Maui County Council unanimously passed Resolution 23-28 on 2/3/23 URGING THE LEGISLATURE TO ENACT A STATUTE PERMANENTLY EXEMPTING BIRTH ATTENDANTS FROM STATE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS.

Point #4 It is a woman's right to choose with whom and where she feels most safe to birth

For these reasons, we are respectfully requesting that the CPC Committee pass HB955, and recommend they remove the Birth Attendant expiration date of July 1, 2025, as the Maui County Council requested.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:07:40 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Danielle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of HB955, which protects the ongoing practice and valuing of Traditional Midwifery in Hawai'i. As a community that consists of literally dozens of cultures that all place high value and priority on traditional practices, this is something we must be committed to protecting in our laws and regulations.

In the case of traditional midwifery, the low risk of this practice is well-documented worldwide, as well as in Hawai'i. In fact, we know that allowing women to choose what is best for their own bodies is going to support the best ultimate outcome in any situation - but especially in pregnancy and birth.

Please vote to protect women's reproductive rights and our culturally-based practices here in Hawai'i.

mahalo,

Danielle Surface

96818

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:09:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jolene Bachman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a practicing OB/GYN MD in the state of Hawaii, I feel strongly about standing up for the safety of our people, and being a voice for the victims of an unsafe home birth experience who cannot speak for themselves. I work closely with certified nurse midwives and know firsthand how important their training and knowledge is for the safety of the women they care for. Me and my colleagues are on the receiving end at the hospital for patients that have been brought in from the homebirth setting for maternal and fetal complications. We see, firsthand, the tragedies that do occur from inadequate patient selection or unskilled management. I believe that every woman has the right to make a medically informed decision about her own delivery location and provider, and our state needs to do their part in giving our people safe options by mandating that Hawaii's home birth providers' education and training be held to the same standard enjoyed by people residing in other states. For a natural process (childbirth) with an inherently high baseline morbidity and mortality rate, it is important to allow people the safest environment possible should they choose a natural home experience.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:30:41 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joyce L Hosoda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB955

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:46:52 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rena Blumberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write to support HB 955,, which will allow the existing exemption for birth attendants to continue to practice without a license.

I birthed my son at home and though it was a perfect birth, my husband and I would have benefitted from a birth attendant.

I later trained to become a certified birth assistant. I never charged for these services. I took every training available, including First Responder and EMT.

I support the right of women to make their own birthing choices. Birthing is natural and sacred. Please allow us to birth in the ways that serve us best.

Birth is a natural event for many women. It does not need to become a surgical event nor a medical emergency. Let us birth in peace!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:46:31 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Salzer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:51:09 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jamie Palmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:53:02 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aaron Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:57:34 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gigi Azmy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:10:22 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Grace Beckett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955! Let women choose who they want to attend their birth! Their right should be protected! The Government has no roght to dictate a woman's birth choices. Thank you.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:14:28 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lizele zeager	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:05:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sharon Alvarado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in total support if this measure allowing women the right to choose.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:20:45 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hedder Pascua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:48:23 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alex Karola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:18:35 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mariko Togashi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:01:07 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane DePaolo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:06:30 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diane Hiebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices."

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:11:52 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Meghan Burt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:15:54 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jill Robins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to decide birth choices.”



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:17:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristine Hanson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:56:42 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY FOR HB955**

**Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Committee members:**

**I write to ask your support for HB955 which would extend the exemption for traditionally trained midwives to act as birth attendants without being in violation of licensing laws. Currently, and for the past three years, traditionally trained midwives have been able to help women who chose to birth their babies at home with a midwife. However, that exemption is set to expire this coming June.**

**The Legislature must not allow that to happen, as many women will be left without the care they need, especially on neighbor islands, where rural communities face distance and financial problems in obtaining a birth attendant.**

**Even more women would be denied their choice of birth attendant. Those women, like me, actively choose to give birth at home and need an attendant who can practice in the community setting, not a medical facility.**

**For me, a homebirth mother of three, this is a feminist issue. And an issue of bodily autonomy. The midwives for all three of my children’s births were traditionally trained midwives – experts on the delivery of babies. I am so grateful to those women, and so proud to have known them.**

**I strongly urge you and the Committee to support this urgently needed bill to protect midwives who are traditionally trained.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**Ramona Hussey**

**Homebirth mother & retired attorney**

**2315 Liloa Rise**

**Honolulu, HI 96822**



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:31:41 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sophia Henderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:32:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:39:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carissa Onuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:46:39 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jamin hiebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! As a native Hawaiian I believe the Government has no right to dictate how an indiginouse family chooses to practice their traditions and faith in the birthing process.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:02:04 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Avery Olson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear House Committee on Health and Homelessness, I oppose HB955, Relating to HRS457J, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

I am a practicing OBGYN resident in Honolulu with some time in my training spent in Hilo. Throughout our training as young physicians, we work with licensed midwives. Midwives are invaluable in the services that they provide, but unfortunately, that is not what this bill is about. This bill is about giving unlicensed birth attendants the ability under the law to give advice to birthing people. These birth attendants will be giving advice that could mean life or death for two patients, the mother and the baby. They will not have formal training, and most patients will not understand what this means. They may not understand that the lack of training may mean they will be failed to identify as high risk, and the patient risks their baby dying. Please vote NO on HB955, because it is what is safer for our mothers, babies, and community.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:04:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Kanekoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the indigenous birth workers and their rights to practice.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:10:01 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lauren Ing	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Birth attendants or providers who are unlicensed are a danger to the mothers of Hawaii. Labor and the birthing process can be dangerous and requires skilled providers.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:15:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deborah Payne-Chun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:14:40 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kumele Tiogangco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and members of the committee,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 955. Please pass this measure.**

My name is Kumele Tiogangco and I am a sophomore attending Kamehameha Schools Hawaii campus. I was born in my home in Hilo with a midwife and my immediate family. I believe that it is important for our mothers to always have choice in where they give birth and who will help them. Please do not make it illegal for mothers to give birth with traditionally trained birth attendants. This is a right that should never be taken away. Many families, like mine, do not feel comfortable in a hospital unless it is a life-threatening emergency. Thank you for keeping our families safe with choice.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Kumele Tiogangco

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:18:39 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ashley Stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To Hawai'i 2023 Legislators,**

My name is Ashley Stewart and I was born and raised on the island of Maui. I have birthed two healthy children at home w/ the assistance of various birthworkers. I am in support of SB1047 and HB955 RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES.

Access to Midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all Birthing people and their children. I support continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J as written in SB1047 and HB955.

These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, cultural and religious freedom for Hawai'i.

Please Support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai'i. Support maintaining active pathways for the perpetuation of traditional practices of health and healing in our communities.

With Gratitude,

Ashley Stewart

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:28:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rebeka Oyama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:30:28 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaiuluakane Tiogangco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Nakashima and members of the committee,

**PLEASE SUPPORT BILL HB955**

My name is Kaiuluakane Tiogangco and I am from Hilo, currently attending the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. This is a critical bill for the furtherment of birthing mothers in our communities. It is imperative that our families can choose home birth/midwifery—Mahalo for your ongoing support for the family right in Hawaii and your support for this bill.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony,

Kaiuluakane Tiogangco

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:31:17 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erin Gertz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a practicing, licensed OB/GYN, I oppose this bill.

I agree with the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology which states: "Women inquiring about planned home birth should be informed of its risks and benefits based on recent evidence. Specifically, they should be informed that although planned home birth is associated with fewer maternal interventions than planned hospital birth, it also is associated with a more than twofold increased risk of perinatal death (1–2 in 1,000) and a threefold increased risk of neonatal seizures or serious neurologic dysfunction (0.4–0.6 in 1,000)... Although the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (the College) believes that hospitals and accredited birth centers are the safest settings for birth, each woman has the right to make a medically informed decision about delivery. Women should be informed that several factors are critical to reducing perinatal mortality rates and achieving favorable home birth outcomes. These factors include the appropriate selection of candidates for home birth; the availability of a certified nurse–midwife, certified midwife or midwife whose education and licensure meet International Confederation of Midwives’ Global Standards for Midwifery Education, or physician practicing obstetrics within an integrated and regulated health system; ready access to consultation; and access to safe and timely transport to nearby hospitals... In the United States, certified nurse–midwives and certified midwives are certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board. This certification depends on the completion of an accredited educational program and meeting standards set by the American Midwifery Certification Board. In comparison with planned out-of-hospital births attended by American Midwifery Certification Board-certified midwives, planned out-of-hospital births by midwives who do not hold this certification have higher perinatal morbidity and mortality rate."

Reference: ACOG Committee Opinion number 697. Planned Home Birth. April 2017, reaffirmed 2020. <<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2017/04/planned-home-birth>> Accessed 2/13/2023.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:38:34 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherah Costales	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, my name is Sherah Costales. I am a home north mama and a resident of Kauai, Hawaii and I stand on my written testimony in support of HB955.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:47:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emson Sayud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices."

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:38:25 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Seloma Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a home birth mama and am in support of this bill. it is so important to keep traditional midwife practices alive, to pass them on to others. Every woman has a right to choose how she wants to give birth.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:06:59 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Felishalyn Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY support HB955. Traditional Midwifery must be preserved and available to all Hawai'i families.

Giving birth in a hospital with professionals and medical equipment does give a mother a sense of comfort when it comes to things like maternal mortality, however, it also adds stress when thinking about the medicalization of labor and delivery. When I found out I was pregnant and began to do my research, I was mind blown. The American [health care system](#) views childbirth as a medical emergency rather than a natural occurrence. There is an emphasis on medicines and costly interventions. The moment I found that out I looked into other birthing options rather than a hospital birth.

I have two daughters. My first daughter was birthed at Kapi'olani Medical Center and my second was at my hale. Both labor and delivers were safe and healthy. The difference between the two were my midwives. During my first birth, I had no midwife. I felt like my birth was treated like a medical event. All emotional support was not present, as far as the medical staff. The staff made me feel unsure of myself as a mother. They disregarded my concerns because I was a first time mother and, according to them, I didn't know what I what I was doing. However, I did know. I took birthing classes through, Ka Lāhui o ka Pō, also known as Birthing the Nations. They work with midwives. This class surrounded us with support and gave us practical 'ike. It gave me so much confidence in my self emotionally, spiritually, mentally and physically as well as knowing what to advocate for in a hospital setting. I knew what I was doing going in that day. I prepped for that moment for nine months. But the moment I got face to face with that hospital staff, I was belittled.

My second birth was a dream. My midwives listened carefully and responded to my individual wants and needs. They were kind, patient, and paid attention to every little detail. They were well educated, skilled, and dedicated to serving myself and my baby. They made me sure of myself as

a mother. What they did for me was invaluable and it is everything that a hospital and medical staff lack.

Midwives are a vastly underutilized segment of the health workforce and are an important part of the solution. Midwives have supported women for centuries. They are trained with a focus on supporting natural births and they are distinctly positioned to provide the respectful, high-quality care that places women and newborns at the center. Research has shown that women who have access to a midwife, experience less preterm births, fewer interventions during labor and shorter hospital stays. Governments that have invested in midwives are seeing the benefits. Countries including Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Ethiopia have shown significant and sustained reductions in maternal and newborn mortality as a result of including midwives as a core aspect of their health systems. Alongside efforts to improve access to health facilities, these countries established professional unions for midwives and expanded midwifery training programs.

If other countries are able to accomplish all of that, here in Hawai'i, we should be able to:

- 1) Permit persons acting as birth attendants after July 1, 2023, to practice midwifery without a license; and
- 2) Include the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process, or PEP Pathway, as proof of a successful completion of a formal midwifery education and training program for certified professional midwives.

Just as this Bill states. As there are no Midwifery Education Accreditation Council, or MEAC, accredited schools here in Hawai'i, it does not make sense to allow only certified professional midwife candidates who have taken the MEAC pathway to pursue licensure here.

Midwives play a crucial role in ensuring that women and babies are supported during the natural birthing process and have access to the high-quality, patient-center care they deserve. I experienced both first hand. Even though both of my experiences were safe and healthy, one was lacking. Midwives are angels on this earth. There is a need for them and there are women who are ready to answer the call.

So today, let's recognize the incredible work of midwives and pass House Bill 955.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:54:42 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
allison vincent	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There are very few options for birth on Kauai that are not the hospital. I have medical anxiety brought on by the COVID pandemic, and I was so grateful to be able to have my baby at home with my midwife. Hospitals are scary to many. Also, the facilities on Kauai are not sufficient to handle all the babies that would need to be born there should traditional midwifery not be an option since many of the midwives on Kauai are not medically certified. I'm planning to have another baby soon and I hope that I will still be able to have my baby at home.

I am not Hawaiian, but I feel called to speak in support of their continued access to their cultural practices, and that includes choosing to birth at home with a wise woman who has trained in birth in their tradition. There are so few native Hawaiian midwives, and there is no way for them to become a medically trained and certified midwife on this island. To comply with this change, interest birth workers would have to leave their home to learn their trade.

I thank you for your support of this alternative method of midwifery. I hope this role is protected and respected the way it deserves to be. There is such a wealth of knowledge about supporting through prenatal, birth, and postpartum that goes beyond the medical paradigm. Birth is not a medical condition. It is a path that women have walked since the beginning of humans living in tribes. So many women choose this path because we intuitively know how powerful it is be cared for by tradition.

graciously,

allison Vincent

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:19:31 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Laine Hamamura and I am a voting resident of Oahu in the city of Honolulu. I continue to offer full support of HB955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated, to match Oregon's law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices.

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. Each of my births were unique to the child I was birthing and I am so grateful that I had the choice to birth where I felt most supported and with whom I felt most safe with and confident in. It is a woman's right to choose with whom and where she feels most safe to birth and the government and it's laws should not strip this right from women.

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. I strongly support HB955 HD 1 and believe the Government has no right to control women's birth choices.

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

Sincerely,

Laine Hamamura





**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:19:04 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelsea Klein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:24:58 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiare Romias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:38:28 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ciera Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth.

Mahalo for listening and agreeing!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:41:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:39:13 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emma Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A women's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected. The government has no right to dictate women's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:44:46 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathryn Taketa-Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I chose to do two homebirths myself, and valued my ability to be able to choose my homebirth practitioners. I believe that other women should be afforded the same privilege of choosing a birth attendant who can assist them that is in alignment with their cultural values and practices. These types of birth attendants can assist in a home or hospital birth setting, and can make a big positive difference in the experience of a woman giving birth. I just believe that women should be informed about the birth practitioner's level of education and training. If cultural values are to be honored, this is important to support HB 955.

Mahalo nui loa,

Dr. Kathryn Taketa-Wong, N.D.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:45:21 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Manuela Arango	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and a women's choice to use a traditional midwife for her birth!!



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:45:28 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Tirrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, my name is Michelle Tirrell and I am a mother of three, two of which were birthed at home. I stand on my written testimony in support of HB955

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:45:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sasha wong-fulton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:01:48 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brandan-Joseph Mafua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices. I want my wife to have the ability to have a safe, home birth with a traditional midwife when we choose to have another child.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:02:42 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Annelies Vander Meulen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:12:13 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Evette Ford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:15:05 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylee Mar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nō,

I, Kylee Pōmaika'i Mar, continue to offer full support of HB955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated, to match Oregon's law and other states that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices. We would also like to offer additional comments to clarify some misconceptions that have been brought up in previous testimony and questions from legislators:

Time is most important for on July 1, 2023, birth attendants with different cultural skills and practices will become illegal unless we pass new legislation this year. If they become illegal it will create a dangerous problem in the community where families will be unable to find a practitioner to serve their needs. We are already seeing this problem NOW as birth attendants, uncertain of their future after June 2023 aren't taking clients, and there are not enough skilled providers available to serve the community after this time.

Secondly, traditionally trained birth attendants have standards, detailed disclosure forms required by the state and have **no documented history** of bad outcomes

Unanimous agreement with all 12 members of the 2019 Home Birth Task Force Report that Traditional midwives exist in Hawaii, they are in demand by their community, and are recognized in numerous states in the US and globally.

The 2/8/2023 Committee Report from the House Health & Human Services Committee stated: "Your Committee finds that traditionally-trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and preferred by some consumers, and that the type of birth attendant utilized at a birth should be the birthing person's choice."

Finally, it is a woman's right to choose with whom and where she feels most safe to birth.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:17:50 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayelynn Mafua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

I am a mama of two. My first birth was at a hospital, which was very traumatizing, with many complications for 40 hours ending with a cesarean. When I became pregnant with my second child, I was very nervous and scared for my birth. I came along a Birth class that educated me on different ways to have a safe and empowering birth. I had the honor of having two traditional midwives that assisted me in delivering my second child at home. My traditional midwives made me feel cared for, encouraged me and overall made me feel safe. These are the things I was unable to receive from my own doctors. I do believe hospitals are for emergencies, but I don't see birth as an emergency I see it as something natural. I don't understand why the state would want to take such a sacred, and personal decision away from us mothers.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:27:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicola Lauu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB995. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected. Government has no right to dictate a woman's choice.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:34:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Warren Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:35:54 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiana Whitehead	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955.

A women's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choice!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:43:24 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pua O Eleili Kelsi Pinto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha Committee Chair & Committee members,**

**I am 6th generations away from Kahuna Laau Lapaau named Poohina, who practiced in Hana and Wailuku Maui around 1867. I found his work in MA research & when I was pregnant and I was excited to breathe life back into these familial practices. my excitement however was met with broken blood work machine and malpractice of obgyn that said I would most likely develop preeclampsia there was no treatment other than low dose advil for the remainder of my pregnancy and I would most likely give birth via c-section. She continued on to say my culture practices dont work.**

**I strongly support HB955 and Resolution #23-28.**

**Were it not for a traditional midwife as well as doing my BA & MA research on laau lapaau looking at my ancestral practices from poohina and many others that wrote about oiwi birth practices. and being active in our homebirth community many in this room and testifying. I would of listened and not questioned that obgyn. When I sought further medical tests from a rheumatologist he quickly caught that OBGYN errors came from a dilation error from their machine. She told me my culture does not work based on her personal bias, as many other testifiers have is common practice as 200-300% more indigenous and colored women die from that practice. I would of have been one of those statistics if it were not for the traditional midwife and my cultural practices.**

**I gave birth at home safely 2016 and 2021. In 2021 it was actually the father of my children who delivered the baby, with the traditional midwife helping. That is an oiwi birth practice that are men are taught how to birth their babies because he is the one that knows me and my body the most intimately. Traditional midwifery make space for breathing life back into cultural practices that were made illegal time and time again**

**The extensive and holistic care that comes from traditional midwifery and oiwi culture does not fit the limiting views of CPMs and OBGYNS.**

**Since the 1900s OBGYN and CPMS have led the modern birthing process. As a result America is the among the bottom worst developed countries to give birth and Black and Indigenous women and children among the top who die or have ill experiences in their**

**birthing experience. NPR 200-300% more bc of bias our hospital system are killing them. In the post partum period.**

**Access to midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all birthing people and their children. I support the continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J.**

**These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, and cultural and religious freedom for Hawai'i.**

**After July 2023, the temporary exemption is set to expire, criminalizing midwifery practitioners who are filling a vital need in our communities. I support the sovereignty of midwifery to continue through traditional apprenticeship pathways in Hawai'i.**

**The perpetuation of community-based apprenticeship for the training of midwives is essential for safety and equitable access to midwifery care for all people, especially Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color families today and for future generations.**

**Please Support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai'i. Maintain a pathway for local people to learn traditional practices of health and healing from elders in their own communities.**

**Thank you for reading my testimony,**

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:39:17 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. Ye Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**February 13, 2023**

**HB 955 HD1: RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES**

**Aka Sovereign’s Law**

**Aloha Honorable Representatives,**

**My name is Ye Nguyen. I am in full support of HB 955, HD1.**

**I am a licensed naturopathic physician and home birth practitioner. Aside from attending an accredited naturopathic medical university at Bastyr University in Seattle, Washington, I have also received some of my training by traditional midwives through the apprenticeship model of which is my preference.**

**I have had the honor of supporting women giving birth both at home and the hospital for almost 20 years, living here in Hawaii. As much as I honor & respect a woman’s right to have a home birth, I value the presence of having care in the hospital as needed. I have had 2 home births myself and have had both the support of midwives & my ob/gyn in my right to choose.**

**Traditional midwives aka traditional birth attendants have standards in their training and undergo a very intensive, vigorous, & intimate apprenticeship with their mentors that could never be replicated in a school setting. They are all trained in normal physiological birth and yet are also very competent in knowing what is not normal, where they can refer if a mother needs additional care. And yet no two traditional birth attendants are alike. That is one of the many beauties of them.**

**As we limit the choices that mothers have, by making traditional midwifery and certain CPMs illegal, we are faced with issues of safety. We drive certain practitioners underground, where integrative care becomes more difficult. There becomes a lack of transparency for fear of persecution. Or worse yet, our traditional midwives become extinct and the art of traditional midwifery becomes lost.**

**Many women actually seek out a certain type of midwife, one that isn't licensed or certified.**

**I truly believe that how a woman wants to give birth, with whom and where is a very personal & very sacred choice that needs to be protected.**

**It is a decision that can affect her on so many levels years to come. An empowered & non-traumatic birth is one where we have options and are fully informed of the risks and benefits of each decision that we make.**

**A woman's reproductive rights are at stake more than ever at this moment in time. All across the globe, women's bodies are being regulated by the government and sadly, many of them by men. There is so much fear around the unknown of birth & a need to control it.**

**Each woman has the right to choose what is right for her body, for her specific situation and for her family. I support each and every woman's right to choose, the right to informed consent and ultimately, the right to their own birth sovereignty.**

**Thank you for your service, for taking the time to understand this very complex issue and all of your energy.**

**Respectfully,**

**Ye Nguyen, ND**

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:49:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Daigle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Midwives are so essential to remaining connected to natural births. There is a place for hospitals but people should have a choice of how they want to give birth to Their child. I support this bill!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:56:18 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noelani Vicente	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Mother and 3rd generation Mauian- I strongly support HB955 - a woman's right to choose traditional midwifery. A midwife's role includes prenatal, delivery and postnatal care ensuring the safety of mother and child using traditional practices and modern day medicine. Government should not dictate birth choices - a woman right to choose.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:02:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amelia Gonzalez	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955,

A WOMANS RIGHT TO CHOSE A TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE FOR HER BIRTH SHOULD  
BE PROTECTED!!!!!!

GOVERNMENT HAS NO RIGHT TO DICTATE A WOMANS BIRTH CHOICE.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:03:41 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Trever Duarte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 955 HD 1.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:07:16 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
McKenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to CHOOSE a TRADITION MIDWIFE for HER BIRTH PROCESS SHOULD BE PROTECTED . government has NO right to dictate a WOMANS BIRTH CHOICES .

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:36:32 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Kapoor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:18:57 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bobbie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill HB955. We need the right for a mother to decide where she births her babies and the right to choose who is attending. Whether she chooses homebirth, hospital birth or something else the point is it's her right to choose. Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:25:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shani Ma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OB/GYN resident born and raised in Hawaii, and I have seen birthing complications affect our population firsthand, including those that are life-threatening. I strongly oppose this.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:11:33 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ashley Dorman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955 HD1. Let women choose who they want to attend their birth. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices."

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:52:17 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angel M. Willey, MD	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: 2/14/2023

To: Senate Health & Human services Committee adn Commerce & Consumer Protection Committees

From: Angel M. Willey, MD, FACOG

Re: HB955- Relating to birth attendants practicing on or before 7/1/2025 from licensure requirements, under certain conditions. Expands qualifications for licensure to include the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process. Effective 6/30/3000.

Position: Strongly Oppose

I am an OBGYN (Obstetrician Gynecologist) who trained in Hawaii and have been practicing here for 16 years. Most births attended at home or in the hospital setting go smoothly for both mother and baby. In some cases, however, there can be life-threatening situations that need to be handled quickly and by an experienced health care provider.

This bill is proposing to allow birth attendents to practice midwifery without a license. The midwives I work with in the hospital have spent many years of training to become nationally certified and licensed. This is usually 4 years of undergraduate education with an additional 1-2 years for a masters degree. An "apprenticeship" type of qualification is simply not enough.

I agree with a women's right to choose her birth attendant and setting, however, they need to be informed of the provider's qualifications and training.

Please help us keep the mothers and babies of Hawai'i safe by having licensed providers attending to our moms.

Thank you,

Angel M. Willey, MD, FACOG

OBGYN



ACOG Hawaii Section Chair

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:01:31 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lauren Botello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:07:07 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eric Botello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:20:32 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Victor Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:52:23 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristin Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

This is a personal choice and government should have no place in deciding how a baby is brought into the world. The sstandard that many have put in the world today is that it is my body my choice. If it applies to one topic it needs to apply to all. This is not a pick and choose.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:27:47 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Meyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955 I believe a woman's right to choose a traditional midwife should be protected and honored. I personally birthed both my children with a midwife and it was the best choice I ever made for me and my children.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:16:05 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patricia Wrieden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:07:09 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean Rueckher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a women's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:21:06 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tom Rueckher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a women's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:56:02 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mona Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:56:57 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brittany Milton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected!

Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:18:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dawn Casil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. Let women choose who they want to attend their birth. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:33:52 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Frances Horwitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:52:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
May Chin	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:06:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kate	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I think that women's access to midwives is extremely essential and should be kept available to those starting families in Hawaii. This practice allows in depth education on both the birthing process, and the numerous changes to women's bodies during pregnancy and to take that away would be very detrimental to those that feel this method is right for themselves, their babies, and their family. I support the notion to keep midwives practicing in Hawaii because it not only gives women more options for birthing but it also keeps midwives employed and gives them the ability to support their families as well.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:09:46 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices."



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:12:37 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Briana Rodrique	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to the House legislators voting on this bill. I strongly support HB955 as a private citizen who has birthed at home once and is currently pregnant planning to do so again. I am lucky enough to have never been inside a hospital other than to visit loved ones. Birthing in a hospital is a great choice for some, but unless intervention is necessary, it is not the choice for me. I would like myself and other mothers to come to be able to have this choice to birth at home. I had an unfortunate loss with my last pregnancy (unrelated to birth), which had me transfer care from my midwife to a wonderful OBGYN in Hilo. When I became pregnant this time around, I started care with her in order to have access to the necessary genetic testing until we found out this baby was absolutely healthy. I was upfront with my OB about wanting to birth at home again like I did with my living son. She is and was 100% in support of me birthing where I want with who I want. A medical professional believes I should have this choice, and I really hope you deem that important as well. Mahalo

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:13:47 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
marisa wriston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly believe each and every woman has a right to choose where, how, and with whom they desire to birth their babies. I am a mother of three babies, all born at home, two born under the loving care of a traditional midwife. Birth is deeply personal and these decisions should be left to the individual family and no one else. Traditional midwifery is a sacred art form that, if lost, would be absolutely tragic.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:10:05 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina Statler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing again in strong support of the amended bill HB955. I have seen the opposing comments, and though I can't address these comments individually, of course, they all make sense in terms of general safety, to the general public. It's not like we want a traditional midwife to be in charge of the obstetrics unit at the hospital. This is a small population of people that want to choose out of hospital birth with someone they trust and they don't want to have to hide underground to do it. All the risks and benefits are discussed between those parties in the privacy of their own home.

Now, do I believe there are people that would try to abuse this exemption? I do. I've been a Maui resident long enough to have seen "midwives" come and go. So, it is **most critical** to keep traditional midwifery above ground where there is transparency and community checks and balances that keep people much more safe than if they are turned criminal and thus forced into hiding. Where less principled practitioners could be lurking..

As much training as I have had in birth, and I myself have trained as an apprentice under elder midwives on Maui, I would not seek to call myself a traditional midwife worthy of this exemption. This is for our Hawaiian sisters who were born here, have birthed here, and have learned midwifery skills from elders here.

Kristina Statler

Maui (via NY in 1988) mother, home birther, retired (student) midwife and birth doula. I am also on the board of directors and a co-founder of Pacific Birth Collective.

Haiku, Maui

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:26:59 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Neysha M. Franklin Diaz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On May 9, 2020, I found out I was pregnant. At the time I was in the military, so I went through the "proper" hospital OBGYN/Midwives care for a couple of months. No one cared to ask about my well beings, other than "normal" care, such as ultrasounds, weight and height, and fetal care. No one ever cared about me. I always wondered how it would be to birth at home, but never knew anyone who did it. After some online research, my husband and I found some midwives who we interviewed.

We found our perfect match after 4 hours of us asking her questions and she briefing us, she also took her time to know us, not as her clients or patients, but as people. She cared for us, she met our oldest son, and she was interested in knowing my family because for her it was really important to know who I was to assist during my birth. She has an excellent emergency plan in place in case of anything goes wrong and my husband and I were very confident with her. After months of care with both her and the hospital (due to the military), I started noticing huge differences in care. The hospital tried multiple times to push for unnecessary inductions, not briefing me that this could lead to unnecessary c-sections or worst.

Week 39 visit came and the hospital did an unnecessary and forced membrane swab that led me to 4 days of post-pain afterward and being scared. My midwives at home helped me recover, took care of me, and educate me. They also made me food, took care of my family, and briefed them so they could calm down.

Thursday after that Monday 39-week visit, my labor started. They came over to my house, they has already left everything ready for labor weeks before. They had such an amazing plan.

Labor began, and everyone was around quietly. At some point I thought it was too painful, they calmly changed my position and labor just happened after that move. It just went so naturally and amazingly.

As a first-time mom (my oldest is my stepson), giving birth, I had the most amazing experience of birth anyone could have. They took such great care during my postpartum period, they visited me up to my 7th week, and till today, 2 years later, they keep checking up on me, to see how I was doing and if I had PP Depression. Who does that? NOT the regular OBGYN, no one at the hospital unless they have to, THEY do this because it comes from their heart, it is just their nature, and that is what I love most about them.

I would give birth 100 times with them before I have to go bath to a hospital ever. No one had ever cared and loved me so much as they did in the most vulnerable stage of my life.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:51:07 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Akela Knott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955! A woman's right to be able to choose a traditional midwife needs to be protected! Government has no right to control a woman's birth choices!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:53:29 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rolinda Pires-Kohatsu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. The women right to choose traditional mid-wife for the birth should be protected! Government has no right to Choose a women's birth right CHOICE!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:52:09 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jonna Hatori	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly support HB955. Let Women choose who they want to attend their birth. Government has No Right to dictate woman's choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:58:35 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kailea Frederick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB955, and therefore a woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected.

Mahalo,

Kailea

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:58:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jackie Brilhante	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:03:06 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Viva Wittman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A person's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for their birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate anyone's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:05:07 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brendyn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:12:40 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mia Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:14:25 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa Pua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:20:43 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel LaBuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:31:25 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Taylor Roberts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB955.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:33:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Meg Ganser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB 955 to preserve indigenous birthing practices, and the rights for all citizens of Hawaii to birth traditionally. These practices keep maternal mortality rates reduced, and maintain links to Land, traditions, cultural values and identities. Support our rights to choose with whom and how we birth.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:35:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mahina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:37:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ivana Burbage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ivana Cook, and I strongly support this bill being passed. I am a new mother who has recently given birth with a traditional midwife at home. I not only got more care than I did in a hospital setting. But I got to find my relationship with my midwife as she helped me step into my new phase of life. Taking away traditional midwives, makes Hawaii take a step back from becoming so culturally accepting in advance. These midwives learn and teach through each generation that is passed on. By keeping traditional midwives, Hawaii is in the forefront To be looked at, because so many people already look to Hawaii to invite new ways of doing things like home schooling, and the ability to have a natural birth. I myself, before marrying my hawaiian, husband always looked at Hawaii as a place I would want to give birth because of this matter. Additionally ,Not allowing traditional midwives, takes away the right for women to have a say of how they would like to give birth, and who their providers are. Especially because based off of factual evidence and my own experience having a traditional midwife, does not in danger a woman, while she gives birth. I am in full support of this bill for my future children, as well as for me to give birth to the rest of my family this way. It would make me very sad if I would have to go elsewhere to use traditional midwives, and not in the beautiful island of Hawai'i.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:38:44 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara Harris	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

My name is Sara Harris and I am an OBGYN. I practice in Central Oahu and I live in Nuuanu. I am writing in opposition of HB955.

This bill will affect the health and safety of the birthing people of Hawaii. Rigorous requirements for state licensure are required for so many professions in Hawaii and delivering babies, especially outside of the hospital, should as well. Any provider performing out of hospital births should demonstrate a level of training and competency to ensure the wellness of those in their care. The current standards are what is safest for families and do not need amendments.

There have been many situations where patients attempting an out of hospital birth need to be transferred to the hospital. Communication and transition of care are absent from the out of hospital providers. Many patients that we see who have failed out of hospital births were not good candidates for this which endangers the life of the birthing parent and the baby. A structured midwifery training curriculum can help out of hospital providers to learn the best way to facilitate safe transitions of care as well as improve patient selection for out of hospital births.

While it is always a person's choice where and how to have their baby, I strongly feel that these choices need to be educated and informed. Patients need to be offered choices that not only make them feel safe but are actually safe. HB955 will not make out of hospital birth safer for birthing parents.

Thank you for your time,

Sara Harris, MD

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:40:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amber Goff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Hawai'i 2023 Legislators,

I am Amber Goff. I have lived in Hawai'i for 5 years. Access to Midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all Birthing people and their children. I support continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J.

These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, cultural and religious freedom for Hawai'i.

After July 2023 the temporary exemption is set to expire, criminalizing Midwifery practitioners who are filling a vital need in our communities. I support the sovereignty of Midwifery to continue through traditional apprenticeship pathways in Hawai'i.

The perpetuation of community-based apprenticeship for the training of Midwives is essential for safety and equitable access to Midwifery care for all people, especially Black, Indigenous and Women of Color families today and for future generations.

Please Support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai'i. Maintain a pathway for local people to learn traditional practices of health and healing from elders in their own communities.

Thank you for hearing my testimony,

Amber Goff



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:44:30 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keana Aina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:51:54 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Burbage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Justin Kalani Burbage, and I am in strong support of HB955 HD1. I am a film Director at a Large studio in Hollywood while still residing here on Oahu. My friends and colleagues of whom which many of you would know their names, faces and works are in DEEP support of this bill and are paying very close attention. They still look to Hawaii and its government as the leader in cultural protection. You have the ability to be the leaders, forward thinkers and the protectors we are expecting you to be. I really do think the negative ramifications of NOT passing this bill would be MASSIVE! Not only for us as Hawaiians not having our traditions upheld and protected, but for the broader message of womans ability to choose everywhere. THIS IS NOT A STATE ISSUE. I repeat the world is watching starting with us here in Hollywood.

I strongly support HB955 HD1



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:57:07 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Autumn Hesia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:01:40 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joshua Hiebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:03:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celena Wittman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support HB955, a woman's right to choose a traditional midwife as a safe and viable option in facilitating and or assisting in her birth experience.**

In 2018 a ProPublica article titled, *A Larger Role for Midwives Could Improve Deficient U.S. Care for Mothers and Babies*, analyzes studies and statistics which make the case for why midwives are an enormous asset in all aspects of the birth experience. I have supplied a few highlights from the article below. I would also like to point out that I am an African American woman who is the mother of three adult children. I gave birth to all of my children at home with the assistance of competent and professional traditional midwives.

Traditional midwives are professionally trained in their trade, either through school or mentoring under an experienced midwife or both. It should be a woman's right to choose an obstetrician or midwife for her birth experience, and it should be the midwife's right to practice in her trade, a trade that predates obstetrics and has been demonized throughout the years within medical communities.

**Snippets From The Propublica Article**

[In Great Britain](#), midwives deliver [half of all babies](#), including Kate Middleton's [first two children](#), Prince George and Princess Charlotte. In Sweden, Norway and France, midwives oversee most expectant and new mothers, enabling obstetricians to concentrate on high-risk births. In Canada and New Zealand, midwives are so highly valued that they're brought in to manage complex cases that need special attention.

Many of the states characterized by poor health outcomes and hostility to midwives also have [large black populations](#), raising the possibility that greater use of midwives could reduce racial disparities in maternity care. [Black mothers](#) are three to four times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than their white counterparts; black babies are [49 percent](#) more likely to be born prematurely and [twice as likely](#) to perish before their first birthdays.

“In communities that are most at risk for adverse outcomes, increased access to midwives who can work as part of the health care system may improve both outcomes and the mothers’ experience,” Vedam said.

## **Reference**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/midwives-study-maternal-neonatal-care>

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:11:48 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Alice Murray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:11:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Wittman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A person's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for their birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate anyone's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:16:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Prema Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Commity,

I Prema Tanaka, am in strong support of bill HB955 in preserving the tradition and wisdom of Midwifery here in Hawai‘i and around the world. Traditional ways of birthing and laboring is a fundamental right for everyone. Birthing with allopathically trained doctors does not eliminate the risk factors associated with labour and delivery. "Studies show that planned home birth attened by a registered midwife was associated with very low and comparable rates of prenatal death and reduced rates of obstetric interventions and adverse maternal outcomes compared with planned hospital birth attended by a midwife or physician." "With the population rate of less then 1 perinatal death per 1000 births may serve as a benchmark to other jurisdictions as they evaluate their home-birth programs." (Janssen et al., 2009) With that being said, physician rarely fullfil the post postpartum needs of new mothers and often times they become prone to postpartum depression and nutritional deficiencies. Again I plead on behalf of all women and children, as a mother, please protect the traditional birth practices of women in Hawai‘i and world wide.

Prema Tanaka

Certified Integrative Nutritional Chef, Double Cerified Clinical Herbalist, Native American (Cherokee, Choctaw Chickasaw Nation) Farmer and Mother.

Janssen, P. A., Saxell, L., Page, L. A., Klein, M. C., Liston, R. M., & Lee, S. K. (2009). Outcomes of planned home birth with registered midwife versus planned hospital birth with midwife or physician. Canadian Medical Association Journal, 181(6–7), 377–383. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.081869>

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:17:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Miché Stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We live in a world today where we have the right, the ability, and the freedom to make decisions based on our beliefs and cultural preferences. What better time to be able to freely decide than when you are bringing new life into the world?

For generations upon generations, women have given birth at home with a midwife surrounded by loved ones. Of course, as time has gone by, more women have given birth in a hospital setting. However, while the hospital is a great choice for some, it is not a great choice for all. I am so thankful we had the freedom to choose, as every single birthing person/family should have the ability to do.

My husband and I chose to use Hale Kealaula for our prenatal care and home birth at the height of the pandemic to allow us safer and more intimate care. They were phenomenal from the beginning of our journey to the end, but ESPECIALLY during the birth. Selena created a safe space for three amazing Black women (Ezinne, Jasmine, Amber) to learn as well as a safe space for Black families to birth, which is paramount in a country where the maternal death rates for Black women and the death rate of Black babies is disproportionately higher than any other race.

Thanks to them, we were able to focus solely on growing and birthing our baby without fear of the maternal health risks associated with giving birth in a hospital. The pandemic restrictions gave us the final push we needed to decide on a home birth, and it was the best decision possible!

Not only was I welcomed with open arms, but my Husband who wasn't even allowed to accompany me to appointments at the hospital was welcome as well. He was even able to have an active role in our appointments in a way we never would've been able to experience had we gone to the hospital.

We also got to know our birth team throughout our pregnancy and knew that the same team would be there to deliver our baby without being pushed to receive unnecessary interventions that often come along with birthing in the hospital.

We went over the risks and the what-ifs in great detail. We were provided with the information we needed and additional resources to learn the things we had further questions on. This model of care allowed us to have full confidence in ourselves as well as our team to birth our baby in the comfort of my home surrounded by love.



I truly believe that the ability to birth at home with a team of midwives who looked like me made a huge difference not only in my birth experience but in the birth experience of many other brown people who have the odds stacked against them in a hospital setting. As I stated before, I am so thankful we were able to have the freedom to choose, and I hope that you will allow every single birthing person who follows the same opportunity.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:12:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nykol Happy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:19:03 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
joanna faso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:22:00 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jessica murray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman has a right to choose a traditional midwife to support her birth. The government has no right to make this choice for its citizens.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:27:36 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lora Burbage	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB955 Testimony

Sb1047

Aloha Chair and members

I am in SUPPORT of HB 955.

My son and his wife chose to have a traditional and cultural homebirth using a midwife this past Oct. The level of care (body and soul) they received was amazing! It layed many of my fears to rest as I saw how the midwife cared not just for my daughter-in-laws physical health but cared about her whole person, emotions, family life etc. and really walked them through what was happening and what was to come. This midwife was very professional, far beyond any obstetrician that I've used or heard of, and I had 4 babies.

I strongly feel this type of health and wellness care should be more widely available to pregnant women. This bill seems to give birthing moms a choice and also meet the concerns of the medical community.

Please vote Yes on HB 955.

Mahalo!

Lora Burbage

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:22:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
melissa nash	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother of three beautiful healthy children all born at home with midwives in Hawaii, I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE must be protected at all costs. The government has no right to interfere with or dictate the birth choices for any family.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:29:09 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
krystle ilar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I've had 3 home births with the most amazing traditional midwives. It's been the best experiences of my life, and I owe that to the midwives I've had by my side.

I SUPPORT HB955 and I believe it is everyone woman's right to be able to say if she wants a traditional midwife as apart of her birth team.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:29:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dominique Fontaine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A person's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for their birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate anyone's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:30:26 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lee Anne Aganos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected!

Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:30:41 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
katie ranke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:34:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Summer Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:34:29 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brandi Timmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB955

Keep the choice in the hands of the parents to chose who and how they get care for their own bodies and preborn children. Why is our own health even a political issue? Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is straightforward. Additionally, Hawaii has a long history of alternative medical care. Let's keep with that cultural tradition that helps make Hawaii what it is.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:31:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Hutchison	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sarah Hutchison and I have been a practicing OB/GYN physician at Kaiser Permanente in Hawaii since 2010. I strongly oppose HB955 on the grounds that it is not safe for patients.

Birth, while it often proceeds without complication, is, statistically speaking, the most dangerous day in the life of a woman and her child. In a moment's time, an straightforward birth can become an emergency due to a multitude of causes including bleeding, hypertensive disorders, fetal intolerance of the labor, etc.

While I believe that women should be able to choose if they wish to deliver at home versus in a hospital setting, the scientific literature has repeatedly shown that home birth is linked with higher infant and maternal mortality. By sanctioning home birth to be attended by home birth practitioners with minimal training and no oversight with basic licensure, we expose our patients to undue risk.

Please do not pass this unsafe bill, which has the potential to increase maternal and infant mortality in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah E. Hutchison, MD

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:36:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aimee Fung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Govt has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:37:41 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
betsy neaves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:37:15 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Merciful Ananda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Hb955-HD1! As a licensed physician, primary care provider as well as home birth practitioner I have worked closely with traditional midwives and midwives whose CPM License is not recognized in Hawaii. These birth attendants need to be able to provide life-saving measures to the families they support. The demand for out of hospital birth is higher than ever, and we have very few experienced midwives available to attend homebirths. license is not recognized in Hawaii. These birth attendants need to be able to provide life-saving measures to the families they support. The demand for out of hospital birth is higher than ever, and we have very few experience midwives available to attend homebirth. We must support women's right to choose who they want to birth with and how they want to give birth!



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:43:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:47:37 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
C. Vierra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955 and a woman's right to choose how she gives birth.

Mahalo.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:48:48 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelly Stern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Every woman should have sovereignty over her own body and her choices in birthing her child.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:49:09 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Krys Perez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:49:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrea Cesarek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:49:37 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Olivia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have had a successful homebirth and it was the best decision we have ever made. I support this bill for the future of moms to have a choice to birth at home. And for midwives to be able to continue on their work of assisting moms at home.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:50:05 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kawailehua pakjake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:52:55 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shanelle Torres	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:53:32 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laura Bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly Support this bill! It is a woman's choice to choose her Practioner .

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:53:40 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katie Junker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:55:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Celso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected ! Government has no right to dictare a woman's choices."

please protect pregnant mothers and babies by protecting Traditional Midwifery,

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:57:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Micaela wooding	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices. Please don't take this right away!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:55:55 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rosemarie K Amico	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! No one has any right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”  
Protecting Hawaii’s Traditional Homebirth is a huge responsibility that we all carry!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:57:23 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ku'uleikuponookealoha Na'ahi'elua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Commity,

I Ku'uleikuponookealoha Na'ahi'elua, am in strong support of bill HB955-HD1 in preserving the tradition and wisdom of Midwifery here in Hawai'i and around the world. Traditional ways of birthing and laboring is a fundamental right for everyone. Birthing with allopathically trained doctors does not eliminate the risk factors associated with labour and delivery. "Studies show that planned home birth attened by a registered midwife was associated with very low and comparable rates of prenatal death and reduced rates of obstetric interventions and adverse maternal outcomes compared with planned hospital birth attended by a midwife or physician." "With the population rate of less then 1 perinatal death per 1000 births may serve as a benchmark to other jurisdictions as they evaluate their home-birth programs." (Janssen et al., 2009) With that being said, physician are not always able to fullfil the post postpartum needs of new mothers and often times they become prone to postpartum depression and nutritional deficiencies. Again on behalf of all women and children, please protect the traditional birth practices of women in Hawai'i and world wide.

Ku'uleikuponookealoha Na'ahi'elua MSN, APRN-Rx, AGNP-C, BC-ADM, PMHNP-BC

Janssen, P. A., Saxell, L., Page, L. A., Klein, M. C., Liston, R. M., & Lee, S. K. (2009). Outcomes of planned home birth with registered midwife versus planned hospital birth with midwife or physician. Canadian Medical Association Journal, 181(6–7), 377–383. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.081869>

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 8:57:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kendra Prado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPER HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:00:03 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer A Cook	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2/14/2023

Personal Testimony

Bill HB955 HD1

Position: OPPOSE

I am a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) licensed in Hawaii to practice Midwifery and currently practice full scope midwifery and provide hospital birth.

I strongly oppose unlicensed birth attendants practicing maternity care and midwifery in Hawaii without the proper education and licensure. If passed, this bill will be allowing unlicensed persons to provide maternity care and birth without accountability and standards of care.

I previously worked as an RN on Oahu in delivery and moved to Idaho and Utah to pursue a BSN, Masters in Nurse Midwifery and Doctorate in Nursing. I returned to practice Midwifery as a CNM on Oahu.

I am in support of CNMs, CMs and CPMs to become licensed in Hawaii and the pathways and board certification to be able to practice and care for Hawaii's population.

I have found that there are many women seeking Maternity care and wanting home birth and women have to travel far to have visits with OB or CNM practices. I am in support of women to have the right to choose where they deliver; home, birth center, or hospital but the Hawaii legislature needs to protect women and place laws against unlicensed practice. There needs to be a way to provide birth statistics, outcomes, peer evaluation and review.

An argument in previous bills is that there are no formal midwifery programs available on Island for those wanting further education to become licensed or that it is a hardship to leave island to get proper training and education. There are pathways for student midwives to complete formal education and to provide care in their home communities. The American College of Nurse Midwives has a Midwives of Color committee (MOCC) and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) chapter addressing healthcare disparities, the need for birthing persons to have culturally appropriate care and to address diversity. These groups also offer scholarships for



midwifery students to complete midwifery programs and grants available for CNMs to open clinics and births centers. The following programs offer distance education to become a Certified Nurse Midwife.

Georgetown, University of Cincinnati, Frontier

Respectfully,

Jennifer A Cook DNP, CNM, FACNM, FNPc

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:01:45 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayko Tamaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am born and raised in Hawaii and flew back home to Oahu (from the mainland) to have a natural home birth with an incredible team. Midwives and doulas are VITAL to the sacred and timeless experience of bringing life into this world. Losing this art is like losing our clean water source. It's a necessary part of life. Please honor traditions and the choice for child bearers to have the birth experience they desire.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:03:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melia Bugeja	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Bil HB 955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife should be protected ! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices .

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:10:18 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sydney Brown	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:16:35 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Axel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB955 because they're overstepping the God given boundaries of their authority by regulating who, how, and where women receive medical care.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:17:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jill Czarnecki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A woman's right to choose a traditional home birth for her child is a sacred personal choice and must be protected. The government must not intervene in personal medical decisions including birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:20:47 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jillian Walden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices."

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:24:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paisley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB955

I am a 13 year old girl who looks forward to birthing, and raising, children in Hawaii. I would like to have multiple medical options when it comes time for me to build a family. My little brother was born at home, it was an amazing experience to see another little life come in to the world straight to his cozy, and safe, home, and to say that's no longer an option is wrong!



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:26:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
matthew bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:28:04 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Matias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:30:25 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zoe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:30:30 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vicki Fitts Bishop	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB995. A woman's right to chose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE should be strongly supported and protected!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:35:31 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarai timmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am ten years old. I saw my baby brother born at home it was beautiful. Please keep it legal.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:39:26 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emma Halenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:48:33 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Whitney Derochemont	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:51:29 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Walter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:57:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom a Kanaka Maoli.

I'm writing in SUPPORT of HB955.

me ke aloha 'āina,  
Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 9:58:10 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gia Firth	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is not fair to those who have paid for school and put in the required time to be certified for licensing and the patient deserves to have a provider with proper education and certification that they do possess the required knowledge to care for them.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:00:24 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mariah Strong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Mariah Strong. I was born and raised with my seven brothers and sisters in Pauwela, Maui. I have two daughters, born safely at home with traditional midwives. I am a senior midwifery student that is working towards getting my CPM (Certified Professional Midwife) license. I am one of the founders of Pacific Birth Collective (PBC) nonprofit, and a current board member. For nearly a decade PBC has focused on advocacy, education and support in the birth community, serving the entire state of Hawai'i.

I support SB1047 and HB955 RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES; Supporting the PEP (Portfolio evaluation) process as a licensing option as well as the continuation of legal access to traditional birth attendants, therefore upholding female reproductive choice and cultural representation in health care for Hawai'i for generations to come.

My mother has been a traditional birth attendant on Maui for 4 decades. She has helped hundreds of 'ohanas welcome their children safely. I always knew I would follow the same work as my mother and aunties. I've witnessed the huge need in all areas of our island for birth workers, and how much our community requests and honors their care and service.

I have first hand experience as a Hawai'i resident trying to get a CPM license on the island and know how impossible it is. Due to this, I have had to make the heartbreaking decision to move off island to continue with my education. With intentions of returning and continuing to serve our birthing community. I have actively been working on obtaining this westernized midwifery license for a decade now. These programs are not short term, they take many years to complete. I have driven thousands of miles, been away from my young children for weeks on end, and spent many thousands of dollars to continue my education out of state. These are privileges that many are not afforded and therefore do not have access to this education pathway. We must support midwifery advancement in Hawai'i, and address these barriers to licensure, especially for native and BIPOC people.

There is NOT an accessible midwifery training path in Maui, or in the state of Hawai'i, to obtain a CPM license. Bill 32 does not support traditional and cultural paths of education without new amendments. I can personally attest to the fact that by training with midwives in the mainland they have no understanding of our values and lifestyle on the islands. They don't know how to

care, support and honor our people and their beliefs. When I graduate, I will need to actively forget this westernized programming I've spent years attaining for testing, to appropriately care for our unique community.

There are solutions being presented to address this oversight, one being the "Sovereign's Law" SB 1047, allowing traditional birth attendants to legally serve our community after July 1, 2023 and the recognizing of the PEP process. Maternal health and midwifery care are connected, and have been for thousands of years, home birth attendants an integral part of our community wellness. The future of midwifery in Hawai'i deserves proper attention and care to protect our unique way of life, traditions and most importantly, our people. Please consider the amendments of Bill 32 and the passing of "Sovereign's Law".

Mahalo for your time,

Mariah Strong

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:03:02 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Ann Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 955, a woman's right to choose a traditional midwife, for her birth, should be protected. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

Thankyou,

Christine Ann Carlson

Feb. 14, 2023

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:06:35 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Breanna Ring	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All birth attendants should be required to have governing licensing requirements as many things can go wrong during the labor and delivery process. All other practitioners in Hawai'i must meet educational criteria, have clinical experience and also obtain licensure to attend childbirth to include medical doctors and certified nurse-midwives.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:03:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
holly gibson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:08:01 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tracy Chen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Tracy Chen and I am a Complex Family Planning Fellow of the University of Hawai'i's Department of OBGYN. I completed my OBGYN residency in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and am currently undergoing a two-year fellowship at the University of Hawai'i to become a subspecialist in complex contraception and abortion care. As part of my fellowship, I also work as a generalist OBGYN and see patients for pap smears, prenatal care, and menopause care in the clinic, and also deliver babies and perform emergency surgeries when I am on-call at the hospital. In order to get where I am, I have had to spend over a decade of my life in higher education, pass countless exams, and sometimes spend over 300 hours at the hospital in a month to train to provide safe, evidence-based care to women at their most vulnerable time. During the course of my training in residency, I have also worked with certified nurse midwives, who specialize in low-risk pregnancy care, and have had the joy of working alongside them to deliver quality care to patients. Many of my midwife colleagues had completed similarly rigorous training and examinations as I had, as well as their own breath of experience, and their expertise was clear to anyone who worked with them. I would personally be happy to go to any one of them for pregnancy care if I needed low-risk care.

However, I have many more concerns about the pregnancy care that some birth attendants provide. A woman should always have the right to choose where and how to have their baby, and I strongly feel that the care that they receive should be of a minimum standard, safe, and evidence-based. Birth attendants who have not completed the minimum education and training to be licensed as a midwife should not be held to a different standard than other professions in Hawai'i that are subject to rigorous requirements for state licensure.

Currently the State of Hawai'i allows for anyone to practice midwifery without a license, and I strongly believe that the 4 year grace period for lack of licensure from 2019-2023 should be closed in July of 2023. Midwives providing out of hospital births should be held to the standards as outlined by our current midwife licensure law, and those who are currently practicing without a license should aim to get licensure to assure patients of the safety of their practices. Patients deserve choices that not only make them feel safe but are actually safe. HB955HD1 will not make out of hospital birth safer for birthing parents in Hawai'i, so I strongly urge that you vote NO on HB955HD1.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:08:50 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kira Vinikas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:12:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shyann henderson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! We have freedom of speech and we should have freedom for our own rights to our bodies. Don't take that away. It's wrong . Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:14:23 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephany Cecil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for the birth of her child should be protected and honored. I strongly support HB955

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:09:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Ramirez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I am in full SUPPORT of the passing of HB955 HD 1 for the following reasons:

1) Traditionally trained birth attendants of all beliefs and cultures are valued and very much in demand. Taking this away will not show support for a woman's choice of how she would like her birthing to be attended to. When a woman decides to go a different route, she is incredibly well-informed, as she has decided to go a different path than what our society considers normal. As a mother of two, both of my births were planned home births. I have also had a OBGYN working in conjunction with my ND should there be any complications. All manner of possible complications were discussed in length and a plan was made should I need to be transferred. As with all medical procedures, there will always be a risk, and that fact was not hidden or dismissed in the planning of my births. My experience with my home birth was an empowering one, with my experienced medical team of professionals concentrated ONLY on me, in a setting of my choosing, with my safety (and my baby's safety) paramount. Home births, or traditional birthing practices, should remain an option should that be the choice of the mother.

2) Being that this is the State of Hawaii, and the cultural practices of Hawaiian Traditional Birthing are still being used today, having this removed is a disgrace added on the the many atrocities made towards our people. As a Hawaiian, I do not want to see more of our culture ripped away "for our own good". Removing this choice is not a benefit for you, and it will be a huge disservice to those who want to continue to practice their beliefs.

For these reasons, I am requesting that the HB955 be passed.

Sincerely,

Heather Ramirez

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:19:37 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Madison Homer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly and fully support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for their birth should be protected and her choice! The government should not be able to dictate how a women gives birth!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:21:54 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sky Wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:23:02 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Trisha Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair ans Committee,

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:23:28 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Franchesca Wantland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected. A woman choice should be her choice alone and no one else's, as she is the one who is giving birth.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:24:16 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
D. Liliha Victor-Frederick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:24:48 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Talea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose as TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:28:26 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lorrie Meyercord	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:30:33 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Juliana Mello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:31:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katerina Hardin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:41:38 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Preeta Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:42:54 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shel Lang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:43:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kelly osorio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:43:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannan 3	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth

choices.”         You can write you own testimony if you want but please submit!! Our future midwives and birthing people are counting on you

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:44:19 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
tara mattes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing as a mother of two children birthed at home here in Hawaii. One of which was attended by a traditional midwife and another as a naturopathic midwife. Both of my midwives (located on different islands) I choose due to their experience and knowledge and trust of the birthing experience. I consider myself so blessed to be able to talk of my birth positively, the support I recieved, the care rendered and the overall experience propelled me to become a doula and help other woman with their experience. I am forever grateful for the small group of midwives on this island that are so devoted to the process of birth. Thank you for supporting our midwives and continuing to leave woman with the choice of how and with whom they want to both.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:46:18 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayla Hoover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:44:33 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joanna Pike	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A women should be able to have a child where she wants

before government women had where ever

my three grandchildren have been born at home and all super healthy

the hospitals are not good and make matters worth

it's all control

let Yahweh bring in the blessings at home if they want!!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:47:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katja Bajema	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I continue to offer full support of HB955 HD 1, with the recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be eliminated.

Women have the right to choose where and with whom to birth their children. I understand that the state feels a responsibility to 'protect' women. However, traditionally trained birth attendants have standards, detailed disclosure forms required by the state and have no documented history of bad outcomes. As long as the birthing woman is fully informed of the birth attendant's training and experince the choice is 100% hers. By requiring these disclosure forms the state is doing it's job of protecting women while respecting her autonomy.

In addition, as a mother of 3 children, 2 of whom born in a local hospital and 1 at home I can say I only have one regret and that is not having birthed them all at home. The experience is vastly different and the option should be avaiable for women to choose the care provider they feel most comfortable with.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Katja Bajema

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:50:06 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mallie White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected!

I have three healthy Hawaiian great nephews and a great niece who were born with the help of a MIDWIFE and they are all now kind, wise, servants and beautiful Hawaiian citizens.

Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices. Thank you for your kind, wise, servant hearts, as well.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:49:29 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Sueda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Alexandra Sueda, MD and I am a OBGYN with Kaiser Permanente. I believe for the safety of birthing people and their babies birth attendants should be trained and licensed, which can still be accomplished within culturally appropriate and sensitive ways. I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant people and their babies

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:50:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sergiana Alecar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:53:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert L White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

I ask you to vote for and to support HB955, as well. Thank you.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:54:02 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene Casserley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**To Hawai'i 2023 Legislators,**

I am Charlene Casserley. I have lived in Hawai'i for 38 years. I support SB1047 and HB955 RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES.

I wholeheartedly support this bill. Birth attendants provide a service to our diverse cultures providing care before and after birth to mothers, families and babies. Did you know that these attendants do home visits after the birth of a child? They often organize meals to be cooked and delivered to the home of a newborn by friends and extended family. They regularly help with cleaning, laundry, shopping and meals weeks after the birth. They provide information and support for breastfeeding and the myriad questions parents have about caring for newborns as every child is different. This all happens at the newborns home allowing the mother and baby to rest and not be required to travel outside the home. This is standard care providing emotional support, physical support, and nurturing including family members in the process. This is not your standard hospital care. It is a valuable alternative which won't exist if this bill is not passed. These women do not deserve to be stripped of their professions, nor their cultural heritage, nor criminalized.

What is needed is affordable education for birth attendants/midwifery locally. Currently this is not available.

These women practice their cultural heritage which has been marginalized for decades. It is time to put an end to discriminatory attitudes and practices that strive to eliminate cultural diversity and its rich heritage.

Access to Midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all Birthing people and their children. I support continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J as written in SB1047 and HB955.

These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, cultural and religious freedom for Hawai'i.

After July 2023 the temporary exemption is set to expire, criminalizing Midwifery practitioners who are filling a vital need in our communities. I support the sovereignty of Midwifery to continue through traditional apprenticeship pathways in Hawai'i.

The perpetuation of community-based apprenticeship for the training of Midwives is essential for safety and equitable access to Midwifery care for all people, especially Black, Indigenous and Women of Color families today and for future generations.

Please Support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai'i. Support maintaining active pathways for the perpetuation of traditional practices of health and healing in our communities.

with respect, Char Casserley

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:56:38 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth I Kendrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:58:24 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kyle Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

ISTRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected!

The government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 10:59:05 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marika anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955, and a woman's choice to choose a traditional midwife whom she deems fit to attend her birth. Respectfully, I do not believe the government has the right to limit women's choices around their own child birth, however well intentioned it may be.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:00:05 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leah Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:02:30 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
brittany	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:04:52 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erin Kumai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955! A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government should not be able to dictate woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:06:24 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Juliann Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing this testimony to show my **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB955; A woman should have the right to choose a **TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE** for her birth. A Women's right to choose where and how she gives birth should be protected! The government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

I heavily considered having my third child at home in the midst of Covid because I did not want to have to give birth alone (the hospital was not allowing you to bring your spouse, mother, friend, doula, ect.). A woman knows best what environment will allow her birth to go as smoothly and stress free as possible.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and please keep it a woman's right to choose between a hospital birth or a home birth / midwife or OBGYN.

Sincerely,

Juliann Wood

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:09:07 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bliss Kaneshiro	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a board-certified OBGYN licensed in Hawaii and Guam, I oppose this bill. State licensure is required for many professions and it should be required for midwifery as well. Every individual has the right to birth in the manner they chose. No method of birth will be made illegal and all individuals can continue to attend birth but people who birth should be able to understand the qualifications of individuals who serve them.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:11:16 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anya Weil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:11:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alison Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a Traditional Midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices. Thank you for hearing the voices of women who bring life to all, and for respecting our right to decide what is best for our selves our babies, our communities, and our ohanas.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:12:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mackie Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A birthing person should be able to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE. Protect this right!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:14:02 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
brendan donnelly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support traditional midwives.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:11:44 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lara Goldsmith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Women have the right to choose where, and with whom, they birth.




**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:16:16 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RENEE KRAMER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”  
 You can write you own testimony if you want but please submit!! Our future midwives and birthing people are counting on you

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:16:51 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amelia Ensign	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support traditional midwives.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:19:50 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Malia Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, my name is Malia. I am a mother and resident of Puna, Hawaii. I stand on my written testimony in support of HB95

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:20:17 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maisie Hoffman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:20:54 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicole Chun-Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern:

I, Nicole K.G.Y. Chun-Park, am writing to testify in SUPPORT of HB955. I fully support the option of having a traditional midwife by my side during my pregnancy, birth and postpartum stages.

As a mother of 7, I was able to choose the best possible care for myself through Traditional Midwifery. My last pregnancy was a set of twins. During my twin pregnancy, I saw an OBGYN, my naturopathic midwife, 2 fetal maternal specialist, and a traditional midwife. Some decisions I needed to make required both care in my twin journey — the medical and traditional midwifery. Traditional midwifery provided healthy nutrition resources and meals, exercises and birth classes, lactation support, massage for aches and pains, guidance and support that goes above and beyond what an OBGYN has to offer other than a headache, ultrasounds and unnecessary exams. The medical field is always forcing us women to induce based on their results from technology and recommendations without listening to what and how the MOTHER chooses to birth.

As a native Hawaiian born and raised here in Hawai'i, I humbly ask that you allow Traditional Midwifery to stay in the islands. For it is a MUST and a NEED for us moms out here who choose to birth our babies at home and/or on our 'āina. Please do not take that choice away from us.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Nicole Chun-Park

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:21:07 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chalé Turner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Chalé Turner and I am a lifelong resident of Oahu. I testified in opposition to the original bill that has implemented licensure and restricted midwifery access across the islands.

Traditional, cultural midwives have been serving our communities long before the State even existed. I am thankful for those who are fighting with bills like Sovereign's Law to protect these community birth workers. We need diverse midwives to serve our diverse and unique population. Hawaiian or not, everyone has the right to choose who attends one of the most sacred moments in their life.

I stand in support of this bill to ensure that families can continue to choose appropriate care and our community birth workers can serve without fear of persecution. Mahalo

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:21:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Suzanna Kinsey	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**February 14, 2023**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB955 HD1.**

**Aloha,**

**My name is Suzanna Kinsey and I am a traditional birth attendant who is directly affected by this bill. I humbly ask you to support bill HB955 HD1 so that I may continue to offer birth services to Hawaii families.**

**As the law currently stands, I will not be able to attend births in Hawaii come July 1, 2023. I have no intentions to circumvent the law. I did start schooling with an approved school based on the mainland. However, I have found it impossible to complete the out of state schooling required to become a certified professional midwife and to achieve licensure in Hawaii due to financial constraints and family commitments. My home is in Hawaii and my family is in Hawaii.**

**I have had many years of training and attending births and I would like to continue to do so. Many families have honored me and enriched my life by inviting me into their homes and their family births. It is a sacred experience. It is my privilege to offer traditional birth care to Hawaii's families. Please allow me to continue to do so.**

**Thank you for your kind consideration in this matter,**

**Suzanna Kinsey**

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:22:15 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michdelle Melendez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:21:28 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edward Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Traditional Midwifery (also known as Midwives and Birth Attendants practicing Midwifery as a legal Midwife) is as necessary now in Hawaii as it has been since people started living in the islands. Traditional Midwifery should be available for the health and safety of all Ohana living on all the islands.

All pathways to become a licensed midwife or practicing unlicensed midwife should also be recognized! The previous law is operating on a monopoly system of education not available in Hawaii, does not represent all education options, nor does it include the safest outcomes of patients found by the task force statistics and department of health in the past few years. It should be amended to allow all types of education to be recognized or none at all, but not at the expense of our midwives that safely serve our community many for decades.

Please support HB955 and keep our Ohana safe.

Mahalo.

Edward Clark

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:26:55 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
teresa walsh, md	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Teresa Walsh and I am a board certified OBGYN who practices with certified nurse midwives in a collaborative practice. I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant people and their babies, and will cause unintentional deaths. I fully support a patient's right to have a birth of their choosing. However, this bill is going to make it more difficult for patients to identify trained and safe practitioners to deliver with. Being able to deliver a baby safely SHOULD BE DIFFICULT. There are two patients with the potential for catastrophic outcomes that cannot be managed at home and a poorly trained attendant will not be able to identify when things may be going wrong to ask for help. If a patient chooses to deliver with an untrained person, that is their choice. However, the language in this bill makes it difficult to identify who is properly trained and who is not. There is too much misinformation today, and this bill will just further that misinformation. However, this misinformation will result in permanent injury or death to moms or newborn babies.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:27:38 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Juliana Koo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill as it is imperative to allow a woman to choose where she would like to give birth, regardless if it is at a hospital, birth center or at home. Should a woman choose to have a home birth, she should be able to decide who is present including a traditional birth attendant.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:29:30 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jami L Sai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:33:17 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nelson K Sai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:35:41 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kumi Ikeda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:37:31 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
jay schell	itsjayphotos	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i believe we should keep midwifery of all practices! i was a home birth and couldn't imagine not having the choice to have my kids in the comfort of my home!!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:38:47 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaymie Lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

**The HB955 is the work of years of conversation and compromise amongst local community members, government departments, and national organizations. The bill is reasonable and has working precedent in other states. The Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force proved there is no outstanding safety concerns amongst Hawai'i's diverse midwifery community. In addition, national and international statistics show that community birth is safe, especially where integration, respect, and collaboration are held in the highest regard. If the intention of Act 32 is in the name of safety for our community members, then transparency and freedom of choice allows honest conversations to flow between caretakers should the need arise. The reality is that when living, there is always risk and there is no one place that can guarantee 100% safety. Ultimately it is the birthing person's choice to what makes them feel safe during such a vulnerable time. Limiting choice through fines and criminalization only creates roadblocks to open communication which is the true inhibitor of giving and receiving medical care when needed.**

**Hawai'i residents have experienced and know there are more choices than what Act 32 presents and they want those choices LEGALLY protected. There are thousands of pages of testimony, spanning nearly a decade, offering support for legalizing the many choices midwives and "birth attendants" have to offer. Legally acknowledging and protecting the diversity around reproductive choice is basic human rights and provides a safety net that exclusion and division counteracts. It is the elected official's duty to serve their constituents demands and uphold their freedoms higher than their own personal biases or beliefs.**

**In addition, Act 32 states, "This Act also exempts a separate category of birth attendants for a three-year period, to allow this community to define themselves and develop common standards, accountability measures, and disclosure requirements. By the end of the three year period, the legislature intends to enact statutes that will incorporate all birth practitioners and allow them to practice to the fullest extent under the law". What it does NOT state, contrary to oppositional testimony, is that there is a 4 year period to allow birth attendants to get a MEAC accredited education to qualify for licensure. The birth attendants have defined themselves, offered standards of care, and presented these findings each year for the past 4 years. Now we are down to the 11th hour... It is the expectation of the constituents that the Hawai'i legislature will obey the law they enacted. The exemption**



**must stay permanent or another way to legally recognize these birth attendants must be created BY 7/1/2023 in order for the legislation to make good on their own law.**

**Sincerely,**

**Jaymie Lewis**

**Home Birth Mother of 3, TBA of 13 years in Hawai'i**

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:39:00 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tania Rodwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY support HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birthing process should be protected.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:40:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beckley Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives,

Please vote YES on HB955.

Thank you,

Beckley Dye

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:42:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Robert Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for scheduling a hearing for this bill. I fully SUPPORT HB955. Please vote YES on HB955.

Mahalo,

Robert Dye

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:43:12 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
karla cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:44:27 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Geneveve Crysedale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government organizations should not have the right to dictate a woman's birth choices, doing so suggests that birth is not a natural part of being human and treats it as an illness.

Within this last week I gave birth to my third child with the expert advice of my traditional midwife. My labor was extremely precipitous, which I expected it could be based on previous experience, and should I have chosen a hospital birth I would likely have give birth in the car on the way to the hospital as there was not enough warning to make it there in time. My midwife prepared to leave as soon as I told her I was in the early stages of labor. And though it was still not enough time in advance for her to be by my side as I birthed my babe, she was available to me every minute and spoke with me over the phone to help coach me through and remind me and my husband of the next steps to take to ensure my own health and that of my baby. Her guidance was invaluable. It kept me calm and confident and capable. Knowing that she was making her way to me and that I didn't have to try to get into a car or ambulance just to get my baby's cord cut and vitals checked after birth was settling. Upon arriving she was able to confirm that everything had gone smoothly and that baby and I were well. This level of connection is not offered through most doctor-patient relationships and I very much doubt I would have been able to get the same level of care and attention in a hospital setting. If anything had gone awry and indicated that further medical attention were necessary, she would not have hesitated to call 911 on my behalf. Please do not further limit the birth care options to which future expecting mothers have access. Hospitals provide excellent care to the mothers who wish to birth there. However, that does not hospitals should be the only option for birthing care.

Traditional midwives provide a personal level of care that many mothers feel more comfortable with when it comes to birth. To me, hospitals represent a place to go when injured or sick, not a place to go when healthy and bringing a baby into the world. I do not begrudge the choices of fellow expectant mothers. We all deserve the right to choose where and how we birth. Please allow my daughters and other future expectant mothers the option to make the choice for

themselves. I fear that forcing them to make the choice you yourself would make or would advocate for will only compromise the experiences of those expectant mothers who do not feel the same.

I strongly support HB955,

Geneveve Crysdale

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:47:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlotte Leger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Midwife is a word of old English roots. Of “Mid”- “to be with” and “wife”-woman. One who is with the woman/mother. Where I come from they are called “sage femme” meaning “wise woman”. This role has been held, shouldered and honored by women throughout all of time. Birth itself demands that kind of presence, the knowledge of breath, of body, of death, of blood.

Who are we to determine today that midwifery is one way, to the exclusion of others? That only one type of education, privilege and access could support the entire function of midwifery for all women? There are so many ways to relate to birth, birthing bodies, and our faiths around this initiation rite. We can no longer impose one world view over another, and cut out people from long-standing traditions that go beyond our very lifetimes..

This is why I strongly support HB955, and the continuation of the Birth Attendant Exemption for traditional practitioners. There is a true human need, beyond standardized certifications and recognition, to allow community members to learn and apprentice inside of their own culture & beliefs. And there is an even greater need for women to be held by those who have answered to such a calling. May we learn to honor and protect midwifery in its widest scope, for all future generations.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:48:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Abby McCoy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. Women in Hawaii should have a right to choose who they want as their midwife or birth attendant. This bill would preserve that right while ensuring that women understand the educational history of the midwife or birth attendant they are hiring. This bill also recognizes that there are traditional, non-licensed types of midwifery that are just as valid as licensed midwifery.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:48:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anne Dericks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear State Representatives,

Please vote YES in HB955. I fully support this bill and I support the CHOICE of all mothers to choose their care providers. I myself want, and I want my daughter, to be able to choose any bith provider she wants for her birth and care for her family. As a physician, I am thankful for the variety of birth providers here in Hawaii. Let's keep the options available for our generations to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Dericks

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:48:56 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Isela Mosqueira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:49:03 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Piilani Schneider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for your concern on this matter.

I am in 100% support to the protection of traditional midwives and birthworkers. They support our community and have supported our community for as far back before hospitals. This is a choice for the birthing mother. Let's continue to support our community and next generation who chose to be born at home.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:50:13 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kekapala Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB955. Please vote yes for HB955.

Thank you,

Kekapala Dye

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:51:43 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Pierce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Birthing is the most fundamental personal choice the humans make. We must allow for all avenues to support to be available to women. The non inclusion of generational cultural practitioners is unexceptable. Extension must be allowed, and until a resonable, affordable and locally available alternative is available, there should only be measure to support birthing providers in all forms.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:52:22 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elis Halenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:52:46 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KIm Logsdon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. The government should not be making decisions about a woman's birth rights. The choice to have a traditional midwife should be protected.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:54:40 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Verra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:54:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charles Haines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

Women's health and health care should be determined by women who have deep training and expertise in their chosen field.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:55:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debra-Ann Cua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:58:40 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carrae Shea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A women's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected, government has no right to dictate women's choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 11:59:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Evan Harrison	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OB-GYN physician on Oahu. I strongly oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant people and their babies. I fully respect the rights and autonomy of pregnant people to make their own decision about their birth experience and who they want to assist them during their labor and delivery. However it is crucial that those same pregnant people have access to accurate and detailed information about licensure and maternal/infant outcomes for anyone presenting themselves as an experienced "midwife" so they can make what they feel is the best and safest decision for them and their babies.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:00:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
heather culp	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955 !!

A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth needs to be protected.

The government has NO right to dictate a woman's birth choice.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:05:19 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I AM IM SUPPORT OF HB955

Aloha,

My name is Sierra Nasr and I strongly support this bill. I am a student of midwifery. HB955 is important to me because I am one-third of the way through the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP). When I moved to Hawaii in 2017, the current midwifery law did no

t exist. For the last 3 ½ years I have used all of my resources to be in a full time apprenticeship with a licensed CPM on Hawai'i island. As the law stands now, if I continue the PEP route to obtaining my CPM credential I will not qualify to be licensed by the state of Hawai'i.

HB955 affects me personally in my line of work, but I also see how it affects my community of birthing families and our elder midwives, whom I look up to and deeply respect. Mothers and families should have the right to choose who attends them at their birth. This is a women's rights issue and these families have the right to choose the birth attendant of their choice.

The midwives, who taught the midwives, who are teaching me, will no longer be able to practice midwifery as of July. Many of these traditional birth attendants pre-date the CPMs who are currently licensed in Hawai'i.

In a state with a known shortage of maternity care providers, the traditional birth attendant fills a very crucial gap in women's health care.

We need to make midwifery care more accessible by recognizing the importance of PEP trained CPMs and by allowing our communities traditional birth attendants to continue to be exempt.

Please SUPPORT HB955



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:01:13 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marian Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support midwives and traditional birth attendants to continue to serve our community as they have for generations

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:05:31 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Essence Philip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Women should be able to give birth in the comfort of their own homes, surrounded by all the ones that they love and everything that means the most to them. Childbirth is hard as is, but to have limitations on when, where and how so it's just inhumane. Taking away the right for people to live out their birthing fantasies it's just wrong. I stand in SUPPORT with keeping things the way they are. Women in Hawaii should be able to birth children in their homes with a midwife present. Don't deprive future generations this right of pure bliss.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:05:36 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haley Callahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

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 eleven years. I am also a student at a MEAC-accredited college, working toward my midwifery degree.

**I full-heartedly SUPPORT HB 955**, 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.

HB 955 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.

With deep respect and trust that those placed in power will do what is just for the bodies effected by this bill,

Haley Rabago Callahan

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:08:46 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Botello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:05:24 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bach ly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:13:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Psera Newman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:09:54 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chrystie Fujimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OBGYN practicing in Hawaii for the past 17 years. I am writing in opposition of HB955. State licensure is required for many professions in Hawaii and birth attendants providing out of hospital births should be held to the standards as outlined by our current midwife licensure law. I strongly support a parent's choice of where to birth but they need to be offered choices that are actually safe - licensure helps to ensure this.

I told this story a few years ago when midwifery became licensed here. It was the story of the mother who was transferred to the hospital with a purple fetal extremity extending from her vagina. I was the physician on call that night. What haunts me beyond this complication, is that this mother had a complex medical condition and I have no idea how she was counseled regarding her birth options. The infant that I handed to the pediatric team was lifeless, but fullterm and perfect. The complications that the mother faced post delivery drew on every of hour my training and expertise. Her case was reviewed for months and hospital protocols were improved. But I still don't know if her birth attendant ever formally reviewed her case or if she has since become licensed in Hawaii - there truly was no system of accountability at that time. But I do know that this mother and her baby deserved better, and we need to ensure the safety of our birthing mothers without unsafe exceptions.

Chrystie Fujimoto, MD

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:15:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jackson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support hb955. A woman's right to chose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:18:00 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jngwen Hou	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OBGYN/CNM. I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant people and their babies

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:17:38 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rebekah Botello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Representatives -

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL, CULTURAL, or RELIGIOUS MIDWIVES for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

It is imperative that Hawaii protect the traditional practices of the Hawaiian community. Women who choose traditional birth attendants DO NOT want a western medical approach. They want something different that can only be provided by those who are trained in traditional methods. Much like someone would not want to learn to dance Traditional Hula in a western dance school, pregnant mothers who desire a traditional approach to their birth do NOT desire to work with those trained in western schools.

If the field of birth work is regulated at all (which I strongly believe it should NOT! But that is another point altogether!)... then every single person in this field needs to have equal access to their chosen methodology.

Those who are raising concerns about traditional birth workers are NOT THE CONSUMERS! They are disgruntled people who have little to no business interfering with women's choices and should practice their own skills with those who desire their services. Most who oppose women's choice of traditional midwives are NOT FROM HAWAII and should truly stay out of this business and run in their own lane.

As representatives for EVERYONE... you MUST PROTECT the desires of each portion of the community, even if it isn't the majority.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:18:42 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
McKayla Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of women having the choices of who they want present at their births! This is a reproductive right as a woman. The government should not have control on how we chose to bring our children into this world. After having a unnecessarily traumatic delivery in the hospital with my first child I could never imagine having no choice but to go back. Now pregnant with my second child I choose a traditional midwife who honors my choices as a birthing mother and now truly feel safe in the way I'm choosing to bring forth life.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:21:05 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
tina ah puck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. Cultural practices surrounding birth need to be protected. Birth is not usually a medical issue. Midwives are a lot safer than hospitals. Please support traditional midwives who are so needed especially in rural communities.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:19:25 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela cruz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birthing process should be protected! Having successfully had 4 home births with a midwife, the power and right to choose my own birthing practice as well as be supported in my choice of traditional practices should not be dictated by any governing party.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:21:58 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Krystal Pu Chung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should have the right to choose any person as my midwife and they should be honored and recognized through their experience and cultural practice. It's the only way I have or would want to give birth. My birth, my body, my choice!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:22:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Carvalho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Bill HB955. A woman's right to choose traditional birthing methods utilizing a midwife should be protected. This should be the personal choice of the birthing mother, not the government!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:23:40 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louisa DiGrazia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:24:50 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Essman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB955. A Woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected, and must be protected. The Government had no right to dictate a woman's birth choices. It is her human right to choose the people to birth with and place of her birth. Mahalo

Aloha

Barbara essman

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:29:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nayeva Pajot-Gendron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:24:55 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jules Gard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Birth is a natural part of life. Women have been giving birth with midwives since the beginning of humanity. It should remain with this wisdom.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:32:34 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joel C Helge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident of the state of Hawaii, I stand in solidarity with indigenous kanaka people. I support Hawaiian traditional cultural practices and therefore I support passage of this bill. To matriculate an intrinsic human activity like birth and to codify practice of birth assistance in law in exclusion of indigenous cultural practice would be a form of genocide. Cultural practitioners have the human right to provide their essential service in continuity of their heritage, free from legal requirements of medicalized care; importantly a separate issue properly regulated by law.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:29:52 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
emmely felipe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in full support of this bill. We need this, Hawaii needs this, Wahine need this!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:34:43 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Krishanda S	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:37:12 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara Kahele	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. I am an 'Iolani graduate and am currently enrolled in college. I am an educated mother of 6 children and they are the future. I was honored and privileged to have a TRADITIONAL midwife at my home births. I trust her with my life. I can't say that about any other healthcare professional that I know. She knows me and has given me the ability to be confident in my body and its ability to birth my babies. My daughters have also expressed their desire to have a traditional midwife with their future pregnancies and births.

When I was pregnant with my 6th baby, I saw a Kaiser Certified Nurse Midwife because my traditional midwife believes in keeping a good relationship with my medical backup. I opted out of having dual care because the CNM was not kind and tried to scare me out of having a home birth instead of being supportive of my decision. I told her I chose a home birth because that is WHERE I FELT SAFE. She shared a horrible home birth story that she had "heard of". When I researched that story, it did not even happen here in Hawaii. As a matter of fact, it occurred in Texas where they require all midwives to be licensed. Her story did the opposite for me. Instead of scaring me, it confirmed my belief that licensure does NOT make home birth safer. Additional education does NOT make home birth safer. Requiring midwives to be licensed only limits and restricts women's choices.

Why are we trying to fix something that is not broken? Asking myself this question has led me to believe that this has nothing to do with safety, but everything to do with controlling the people. If that's the case, the birth world may end up like other traditions you have attempted and failed at controlling like fireworks. The people of Hawai'i believe in traditions.

My greatest fear for the next generation is that they will decide to birth WITHOUT any attendants because of how strongly they believe in having who they CHOOSE at their births. Is that making home birth safer? No, it's not. It's putting them at a higher risk.

Again, I STRONGLY SUPPORT traditional midwives here in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and kokua on this matter.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:37:22 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelly Patterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill, I support freedom.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:40:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marianna Pires	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I, Marianna Pires, am writing this in support of the Sovereign's law. I have 3 beautiful healthy children and 2 of them were born at home under traditional midwives's care. From my personal experience, I can compare the care I had in the hospital and at my home surrounded by loved ones. By far, giving birth at home was the most beautiful and amazing experiences I ever had and I hold them dearly in my heart.

We, as a community, need our traditional midwives, for this knowledge was passed down through generations and we, women, know best what to do when the subject is to birth our babies. We need to have access to this ancient knowledge freely, specially us who live in rural areas.

Please do not take this from us. It is our right to decide where and how to birth our children.

Sincerely,

Marianna Pires

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:43:11 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Adrienne Jang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955. A woman's right to choose a traditional midwife for her birth should be protected. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

Dr. Caterina Desiato  
3348 George St.  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96815

## **Hawai‘i State Legislature**

### **Subject: HB955-HD1**

Aloha mai kākou,

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify. I am Caterina Desiato, PhD in Communication and Information Sciences with Advanced certificate in Women’s Studies from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, co-founder of the association for informed birth Nascere a Salerno, in Campania, Italy, and mother accompanied by a traditional midwife while giving birth. I have been following the recent years’ legislative efforts relating to midwifery licensure in Hawai‘i and I am writing to share international perspectives and studies as well as the experience of women from my region, in support of HB955-HD1.

Over the past two centuries my home region have regulated midwifery subsuming it under medical institutions and professions. This efforts have perpetuated hostility and marginalization of traditional practices which damaged both traditional and medical practitioners, and most of all the mother and children who have not received the care they deserved. The current overmedicalization of birth in my region is a direct outcome of this process, with Cesarean deliveries reaching 59% of births in 2016 (Italian Ministry of Health, 2016) against the 10-15% maximum rate recommended by the WHO, and alarming levels of obstetric violence, including medical interventions executed without women’s consent (survey Doxa-OVOItalia, 2017).

When necessary, medical interventions are life saving. Yet, they can be no substitute for traditional knowledge, which is increasingly shown to be life saving as well, as it offers an understanding of the many possible physiological courses of birth, in alignment with the mother’s cultural and spiritual beliefs, courses that medical protocols sometimes unnecessarily and dangerously disrupt. For each medical intervention, there is a significant increased risk of complications and mortality for the mother and child, as well as health problems later in the life of the child: in very high-resource settings such as the Netherlands, “compared to vaginal birth, maternal mortality after cesarean section was three times higher following exclusion of deaths that had no association with surgery” ([Kallianidis et al.](#) European Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Biology, 2018). The presence of non-medical birth practitioners significantly decreases the likelihood of unnecessary medical interventions and increases the likelihood of uncomplicated births ([Kingdol et al.](#), 2018). A recent study reviewed the most comprehensive evaluations of non-clinical interventions to reduce the rate of Cesarean sections in hospitals: they found in all 15 qualifying studies high confidence rate that positive outcomes require *alignment with cultural norms and balance of power between medical and non-medical birthing practitioners* ([Kingdol et al.](#), 2018). If the definitions and protocols of cultural practices are based on state and medical standards rather than on cultural practitioners’ accountability to the communities they actually serve and their values, there is not the necessary respect and balance of power to provide the best possible care.

My region's history as well as current international studies show that training and regulation of local and traditional midwifery based on the medical model are highly costly yet have low impact on the reduction of mortality ([Bergström & Goodburn, Studies in HSO&P, 17, 2001](#)) and may be counterproductive ([Kingdol et al., 2018](#); [Bergström & Goodburn, Studies in HSO&P, 17, 2001](#)). While licensure based on medical training is very valuable for midwives operating within the medical system, traditional midwives need to be available and accountable to the community in the terms of their own practices and cultures. A good communication between strong, independent, and mutually respectful networks of traditional midwives and a well distributed referral network, available and accessible when obstetric care is actually necessary, appear to be the most effective, most inclusive, and less costly way to safety ([Bergström & Goodburn, Studies in HSO&P, 17, 2001](#)). Instead, the licensure system recently introduced in Hawai'i involves a costly process that de facto excludes more than half of the midwives who have been practicing in the recent years. This process dangerously takes away from women, with the exception of the most privileged, the choice of a safe birth with a trusted attendant of their tradition and culture.

When the current licensure system was introduced in the legislature, I was in touch with the Midwives Alliance of Hawai'i and the Hawai'i Homebirth Collective and I could not help but notice with alarm that among the 13 (or probably less) midwives who would be eligible for licensure in Hawai'i, all except one, were white. That was *not* a coincidence. It was the result of structural socioeconomic unbalances that licensure, without the exemption proposed in this bill, does nothing but perpetuate.

As a scholar and a white person in Hawai'i I feel it is my responsibility to acknowledge the fact that all socioeconomic indicators in Hawai'i currently tell us that there is still a strong imbalance that privileges white people over Hawaiians, as well as brown and black people on the islands. Unequal access to economic opportunities and power on a race base is the very definition of racism. The promoters of the midwifery licensure system as it is currently being implemented may not have intended to exclude Hawaiians and people of color from midwifery, and nominally attempted to protect Hawaiian practices, and yet, in the actual context, it de facto perpetuates the existing imbalances.

Indeed, the cost of licensure is passed directly on to the families midwives serve. This makes midwife-attended births accessible mainly to the economically privileged, a privilege that in Hawai'i is rooted in unbalances that, as we just mentioned, have very specific historical and racial bases, and need to be redressed. Exempting traditional midwives from medical midwives licensure is a crucial step in the direction of redressing deep rooted imbalances on the islands.

Therefore, considering the strong international evidence on the benefits of self-regulated, place-based, traditional birthing practices and the specific socio-economic imbalances that the introduction of this bill would help to redress in Hawai'i, I urge you to support HB955-HD1: a bill for a birthing system that truly maximizes safety, inclusiveness, and affordability to all.

Mahalo,



Caterina Desiato

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:44:12 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paulina Nunez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:45:30 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lantana K Hoke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and council members,

My name is Lantana Hoke. I was born and raised on Maui, and I am an educator at the University of Hawaii Maui College, an employee at Pacific Birth Collective, an organization that supports birth and wellness choices throughout Hawaii, and a home birth mother.

I am testifying today in strong support of Resolution 23-28.

Midwifery licensure was a positive step with good intentions toward improving maternal health. However, as the law stands now HRS 457 does not account for some very important considerations. This bill, HB955, addresses the major holes in that law and is a win-win solution.

The first positive aspect of this bill is respecting reproductive choice. To suggest that prohibiting this choice is for consumer protection is frankly belittling to women. Through my work with PBC, I have counseled many women through making choices about their care while pregnant. Many of them do not want to go to the hospital for very valid reasons. The WHO reports that 1 in 6 American women experience mistreatment during childbirth, and their findings show that that mistreatment is experienced more frequently by women of color, when birth occurs in hospitals, and among those with social, economic or health challenges. There's also a really high c-section rate, and a growing maternal health care crisis in America. I have worked with many women who refuse to go back to the hospital after a traumatic experience. We are so limited on midwives in my community - Maui - that there aren't enough to meet demand. I have talked with women who have struggled with the choice to give birth at home, alone, with no attendant, because they are so scared of the hospital and they could not find a midwife. If we further reduce options by not allowing this exemption to stand, we're going to force some pregnant women into really difficult choices and potentially create dangerous situations.

Families in Hawaii always have and will continue to seek out prenatal, birth and postpartum support from traditional midwives as they have for many generations and the reality is, they're going to continue to do so. It's a lot like attempts at outlawing abortion. Women will continue to seek this care no matter what the law says. To not include these measures will put traditional midwives in a very difficult ethical position as they try to serve those who need them. It may also cause complications with hospital transfers. This exemption has stood for years, and nothing has

happened. There have been no problems. Letting the exemption stand is just letting things continue as they have been. It is safer for all consumers this way.

The second win is by providing a reasonable path toward licensure for traditional midwives. As others have testified, the current restrictive pathway does not account for the geographical restrictions we encounter in Hawaii. To go to midwifery school on the mainland is expensive and out of reach for many practicing traditional midwives, many of whom have been learning and working for decades via the apprenticeship model. On Maui, the only licensed midwives are all white and none of them are from Hawaii. The current pathway toward licensure excludes many women, especially women of color, who provide important care to their communities. The Portfolio Evaluation Process is a nationally approved educational route, and is a reasonable and attainable pathway to licensure.

At a time when much of America is whittling away at women's reproductive freedom, we have a real opportunity to be a part of protecting these rights here. Midwives will play a major role in addressing the dire maternal health care crisis in America, and we should do everything we can to increase the number of midwives in our communities. We need every one of them.

I respectfully ask that you pass HB955.

Mahalo,

Lantana Hoke

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:45:58 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alexandra Kisitu	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

My name is Dr. Alexandra Kisitu. I am an alumna of UH Manoa, and my research and doctoral study centers on homebirth in Hawaii. I have spent over 6 years studying, interviewing, and researching homebirth. I am also a homebirth mother of two keiki. I am in full support of this bill. The current literature on homebirth shows that homebirth is still an excellent choice for low-risk moms. Whatsmore, choice of practitioner, birth attendant, and culturally aligned midwives are necessary to producing positive outcomes for mom and baby.

As you may have noticed, those in opposition to this bill cite conflicting data about homebirth and neonatal outcomes. Unfortunately, their research was flawed in that they did not scale their figures to the amount of homebirths versus the amount of hospital births. We cannot have accurate data and findings without scaling data, as you know. Also, when applying logistical regression analysis, it is standard to have a much larger sample size in order to produce significant results. Further, there are troubling gaps in the data in that comparing hospital birth records and Hawaii birth certificate data is illogical. It is unclear why these two data sets were used - example: why does the study count moms who planned homebirths but had babies in the hospital? This is a tricky way of skewing data. Further, it appears that if any one factor produced adverse neonatal outcomes (in both homebirth and hospital birth), it is tobacco use (not choice of practitioner or homebirth).

As you know, from the DOH data, homebirth and choice of practitioner do not have adverse affects on maternal or infant outcomes. In fact, we might assume that outcomes are more favorable even as choice of practitioner increases wellbeing in health consumers/pregnancy.

As we find ourselves in a place of respecting the cultural practices, consumer choices, and positive health outcomes for women, it is in the best interest of the State of Hawaii (based on the data given) to preserve the choice of birth attendants and midwives for the women and families of the islands. My data reflects this sentiment as well as my own experience as a homebirth mom.

Mahalo for supporting this bill,

Dr. Alexandra Kisitu





TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce,  
CHAIR: Representative Mark Nakashima,  
VICE CHAIR: Representative Jackson Sayama  
Hawaii State Capital  
415 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI. 96813  
32nd Legislature Regular Session 2023  
Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 2:00 PM

FROM: Nina Millar, RN, CPM, LM

As a practicing midwife here in Hawaii for the last 39 years, I have seen all types of midwifery practices and seen midwives and doctors come and go. Currently serving 2-4 mothers a month having planned home births, I have a student midwife in my practice working along side myself and several other licensed midwives in much the same way I learned midwifery. After giving birth to my own children in 1978 and 1982 I knew in my soul that I would apprentice midwifery and serve women giving birth. Since 1984 I have attended Hawaii's families choosing home birth as a direct entry midwife. Over the years as I became more experienced I also became aware of the critical need to continue my studies and grow my profession. Initially earning a nursing degree in 1990, I went on to secure a Certified Professional Midwife certificate when the North American Registry of Midwives made it available in 1995. The decision to be a CPM and continue a home birth practice was made as I truly believe that giving birth is a very transformative experience and allowing women to trust their bodies and have the support of family is crucial. Birth is a natural physiological process generally not needing much interference. But in the event interventions are necessary, early recognition and competent management is essential for baby and mother's wellbeing.

Since starting Midwives Alliance of Hawaii in 1993 and beginning legislative work in 1998, my hope has been to see midwifery develop in its scope of practice and increase availability of the midwifery model of care to more women in Hawaii. Many states and various organizations internationally have established minimum standards of care for direct entry midwives to ensure public safety.

Meeting the requirements that 457J outlines can be done here in Hawaii- see attached Midwifery Education Comparison Chart. I have served as a preceptor for a number of midwifery students from various schools that were able to finish their degrees and go on to be licensed and establish home birth midwifery practices. There is no doubt in my mind that midwifery is definitely a calling. There can be long exhausting hours and repeated personal sacrifices. Midwives are witness to very difficult struggles at times but knowing intuitively when to offer help or let the process unfold naturally is a skill that takes sensitivity and learning. There is always room to grow as a midwife.

I see licensure as a way for midwives to grow- in knowledge, in service and Respect.

**Please vote in opposition to HB955HD1** for the safety, health and well being of Hawaii's birthing mothers and their babies.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Nina Millar  
Direct-Entry Midwife  
Certified Professional Midwife  
Licensed Midwife



# MIDWIFERY EDUCATION COMPARISON CHART

CM SCHOOL (ACME)	EDUCATION FORMAT	HI-BASED CLINICALS	DEGREE	FAFSA	GI BILL	SCHOLARSHIP	COST
Jefferson University	HYBRID	✓	MASTERS	✓	✓	✓	\$33,263/yr 2 years
SUNY Downstate*	ON-SITE		MASTERS	✓	✓	✓	\$18,520/yr 3 years
CPM SCHOOL (MEAC)	EDUCATION FORMAT	HI-BASED CLINICALS	DEGREE	FAFSA	GI BILL	SCHOLARSHIP	COST
Midwives College of Utah*	ONLINE	✓	BACHELOR	✓	✓	✓	\$7,560/yr 4 years
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College	ONLINE ** if already a CPM	✓	ASSOCIATE	✓	✓	✓	\$7,218/yr 1 year
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College	HYBRID	✓	ASSOCIATE	✓	✓	✓	\$7,990/yr 2 years
Mercy in Action College of Midwifery*	ONLINE	✓	BACHELOR			✓	\$6,750/yr 4 years
National College of Midwifery*	ONLINE	✓	ASSOCIATE			✓	\$4,000/yr 3 years
National Midwifery Institute*	ONLINE	✓	CERTIFICATE			✓	\$6,300/yr 3 years
Commonsense Childbirth School of Midwifery*	HYBRID	✓	DIPLOMA		IN-PROCESS	✓	\$9,000/yr 3 years
Florida School of Traditional Midwifery	ON-SITE/ HYBRID		DIPLOMA	✓	✓	✓	\$13,056/yr 3 years
Bastyr University	ON-SITE		MASTER	✓	✓	✓	\$32,726/yr 3 years
*School offers payment plans	**For CPMs without a MEAC education, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College offers a CPM to ASM program that is a 1 year online program. -Information provided is current as of January 2023 and is subject to change-						

[www.midwiveshawaii.org](http://www.midwiveshawaii.org)

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:47:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ghia Borges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB955 to preserve traditional midwifery and birth attendants in our islands. This bill is important to myself, my 'ohana, and my community, and deeply close to my heart as a homebirthing mother of 2.

Birth is a major life event, and pregnancy, birth, and postpartum experiences affect the longterm health of mothers (physically, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically) and stretches far beyond reaching our future generations as well. Protecting mothers' rights to choose how she brings her keiki into this world, is not only a reproductive rights issue, but it's a maternal health issue. They say birth isn't just about making babies, but it's about making mothers. Mothers who are empowered, capable, supported, which transfers to the incredibly challenging responsibility of raising children.

Having an empowered birth, choosing my care providers, my birth attendants, labouring at home, and having a water birth, were all informed choices that my family and I made together, and the right for every family to have the same choice needs to be protected.

This bill protects the birthing choices and rights for all birthing people in Hawai'i, and I kindly urge you to vote in favor of HB955.

Mahalo for your consideration and taking the time to view my testimony.

Respectfully,

Ghia Borges

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:48:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Satoria Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:49:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melanie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I as a young adult in Hawaii want to keep my birthing options open.  
Please do not hinder midwives from practicing alternative medicine!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:51:36 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Breyonna Cadina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:54:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shevona holzman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:47:56 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kyra Kahele	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT traditional midwives in Hawai'i.

My mother gave birth to my siblings at home with a traditional midwife and I hope to do the same in the future when my time comes to have babies. It should be my right to choose who I have at my birth. I have no desire to go into a hospital to birth any of my future children.

Thank you for your time.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:53:11 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda S. Chong Tim	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a Certified Nurse Midwife in hospital based practice in Hawaii for 25 years. I have delivered babies at Castle Med Ctr, Kapiolani Med Ctr for Women & Children, and currently at Kaiser Permanente. In my 25 years of practice, I have witnessed home birth gone wrong, resulting in devastating and AVOIDABLE consequences for mothers and newborns. In the vast majority of cases, the woman was not an appropriate candidate for home birth due to significant pre-birth risk factors. However, these risk factors were either unrecognized or ignored. Lay or apprentice trained birth attendants don't have the depth of training as CNMs, CMs, or CPMs. Out-of-hospital birth by certified midwives who practice appropriate risk assessment and monitoring have documented good outcomes. This is not the case for lay or apprentice trained birth attendants. The women of our community (and their babies) deserve to assume a certain level of education and preparedness when choosing a birth provider or being cared for by anyone who calls themselves a Midwife. I respect a woman's right to choose her place of birth. However, as providers of obstetric care, we are responsible for doing our utmost to keep mothers and babies safe. This includes the ability to recognize women appropriate for out-of-hospital birth and more importantly, those who are not. Certification and licensure are important and sensible requirements if we desire to prioritize the safety of our community.

I strongly urge you to oppose this bill for the welfare of our mothers and their newborns.

Sincerely,

Linda S. Chong Tim, MSN, CNM

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:51:59 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ayanna Walden	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ayanna Walden and I am a OBGYN. I have worked closely with midwives and doulas for the last 15 years. I have seen firsthand the irrevocable harms unqualified personnel have done to women and children, which could have been prevented with education and proper training. Learning is lifelong as science helps to evolve the practice and art of medicine. As physicians and midwives, we are required to continue to show our competence and educate ourselves. This should be required of anyone who is taking care of pregnant women. It can be a matter of life and death or permanent impairment.

I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant women and their babies.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:52:43 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rebecca sharpless	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I've attend four home births as a doula on the island of Kauai. These family's were cared for prenatal, during labor, and postpartum by Home Birth Midwife's. I have personally witnessed the love and gratitude the families have being able to receive this type of individualized support and care. Mothers and children having access to choose this care has a big impact on the future of our community. Birth is a natural part of life and deserves the option to not be medically intervened with if the birthing family choose. Tradition midwifery practices need to be preserved and perpetuated in the ways and traditions that have been passed down forever. The student to mentor midwife relationship and transfer of wisdom and knowledge is sacred and must remain free of governmental regulations. Birth is the foundation of the future of humanity.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:57:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Colette A Pajimola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:02:41 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mari Stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Mari Stewart and I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT for HB955.

My daughter chose to have three births at home. As the Nana, it was such an honor to witness all three and see how professionally and expertly every aspect of her pregnancy, birth, and aftercare was handled by her Homebirth Midwife.

I humbly ask you to erase the July 30, 2023 date which would eradicate Traditional Midwifery in Hawai'i!

Also, please re-instate the ability for all midwifery students to qualify for their studies using the Portfolio Evaluation Process.

Your support will allow my grandchildren and great grandchildren to continue to have the choice of having a Traditional Midwife as their birth support.

Again I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955HD1.

With appreciation,

Mari Stewart

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:02:13 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
nicole floyd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

It is a woman's right to choose with whom and where she feels most safe to birth. In addition, traditionally trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and in demand.

For these reasons, we are respectfully requesting that the CPC Committee pass HB955, and recommend they remove the Birth Attendant expiration date of July 1, 2025.

Sincerely,

Nicole D Floyd



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:03:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anna enderes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:08:30 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in puna please support access to birth attendants. Thank you.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:10:48 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thanasak Sueblinvong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Thanasak Sueblinvong and I am a OBGYN. I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant people and their babies

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:12:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Morea Mendoza	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Morea Mendoza and I was born and raised on Maui. I am here to testify in support of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process. My hope is to convey to you how very qualified traditional midwives are.

I gave birth three months ago to a very healthy baby girl with the help of a traditional midwife. I saw both my midwife and an OBGYN during my pregnancy and was preparing to give birth with my midwife in my home. My midwife worked by donation, which was the only way my family could have afforded her quality care (which came out to \$2k out of pocket); and my OBGYN was covered by the insurance I receive from my employer.

The difference between the quality of care that I received from the OBGYN and my traditional midwife was significant. While my OBGYN would spend a matter of minutes with me, my midwife would spend an average of 3 hours with me every time we met. While both providers reviewed my prenatal lab work, only my traditional midwife was able to advise me from a preventive perspective. Both providers saw that I was slightly anemic, but only my midwife that explained that these levels were related to postpartum hemorrhaging, and coached me on how to up my iron intake without adverse side effects.

Unfortunately, when it came to my labor, my blood pressure shot up unexpectedly one day before my due date. My traditional midwife was knowledgeable and competent enough to make the call: that I was no longer considered low-risk, that the home birth we prepared for was no longer an option and that we had to go to the hospital. She acted responsibly and with the safety and concern of me and my family in mind. She stayed with me as I labored for two days, even sleeping in her car in the hospital parking lot. And after my birth, she came to my home to care for me for the next 6 weeks - cooking me meals, treating me with native herbs to help with my healing, teaching me to breastfeed, etc.

The support that I received from my midwife in during every phase of becoming a mother has directly contributed to the success that I have had postpartum and reentering the workforce. Mothers deserve access to these midwives and should continue have options on how we choose to birth. This is especially important for outer-island mothers, who only have one choice of on-island hospitals to birth at.

So hopefully my testimony gave you all some perspective. The knowledge that traditional midwives have supports safe births and other positive maternal outcomes. Please support mothers like myself and families like mine, and support HB955.

Mahalo nui,

Morea Mendoza

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:14:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheena Weller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support ancient traditional ways of birth through midwives and birth attendees

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:14:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ashley Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Every mother has a right to choose her birthing option. Please keep the options of at home births through midwifery!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:15:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Olivia Lessard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I request that midwives and traditional birth attendants to continue to serve our community as they have for generations.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:16:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT the preservation of traditional midwives in Hawai'i.

I helped my wife birth our children at home with a traditional midwife. We could tell that she was fully invested in us as a family and we trusted her 100%. Our daughters deserve the same choices in their future to have a beautiful, peaceful birth with someone they know and have a relationship with. It is their right to choose because it's their body.

Mahalo for your kokua on this sensitive matter that involves our keiki, our future.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:20:00 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keith Tsukamaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair & Committee members,

I am Keith Tsukamaki. I have lived in Hawai'i for 35 years. I strongly support HB955.

Access to midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all birthing people and their children. I support the continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J.

These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, and cultural and religious freedom for Hawai'i.

After July 2023, the temporary exemption is set to expire, criminalizing midwifery practitioners who are filling a vital need in our communities. I support the sovereignty of midwifery to continue through traditional apprenticeship pathways in Hawai'i.

The perpetuation of community-based apprenticeship for the training of midwives is essential for safety and equitable access to midwifery care for all people, especially Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color families today and for future generations.

Please Support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai'i. Maintain a pathway for local people to learn traditional practices of health and healing from elders in their own communities.

Thank you for reading my testimony,

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:20:52 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ezekiel Kekoanuiokeakua Struempf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am asking that you support this bill. Keep traditional midwifery practices legal and allow PEP trained midwives to become licensed. I was born at home with a traditional birth attendant. This matters to future generations.

thank you!

Ezekiel Struempf

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:21:17 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karin Hayashida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Karin Hayashida and I am an OBGYN. I oppose this bill because it is simply not safe for pregnant people, their babies, and their families. The idea that we would provide allowance for UNLICENSED individuals to practice without known skill or knowledge is alarming.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:42:24 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephanie Nwosuocha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:21:55 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rethabile Molapo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Rethabile Molapo and I wish to express my support for traditional midwifery practices in Hawaii as well as the expansion of the qualifications for midwifery licensure. I strongly support HB955.

As an aspiring midwifery student of color and someday a mother on this island, I have witnessed and am currently experiencing westernized licensing requirements unfairly impact communities of color and limit the options available to all birthing people. I am acutely aware of the challenges faced by aspiring midwives in the state, particularly in terms of access to education and certification.

One major barrier to becoming a licensed midwife in Hawaii is the lack of Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) accredited schools in the state. There are no options available. This specifically limits the pool of qualified midwives available to families in the state and unfairly disadvantages aspiring midwives who may not have access to out of state MEAC-accredited schools.

I believe our collective goal is to achieve safe pregnancy and birth experiences while reducing maternal mortality and morbidity. Black women are 2 to 3 more times more likely to die during pregnancy. We've heard about systemic bias. I don't want to die.

I support making permanent the existing exemption for birth attendants to continue to practice without a license. Traditional midwives are experts in low-risk reproductive health care and provide a unique and cultural perspective and skill set that should be valued and utilized. I hear more hands on deck!

The pandemic scared me and the hospital became a dangerous place overfilled and lacking resources with overworked medical personnel. My mother has been in the NICU for 30 years and was one of those frontline workers who had to leave mothers to help the sick. The hospital system is overloaded as is .

Preserving the practice and legal pathway of traditional midwifery is essential for future generations in Hawaii. It is imperative that traditionally-trained midwives are available to continue this important work and provide families with the care and support they need.

I support the expansion of qualifications for licensure to include the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process. This will help ensure that the full range of knowledge and expertise held by traditional midwives and birth attendants are recognized and utilized in providing care to families in Hawaii.

I'm so excited for what we can do together to serve our community.

Mahalo for your time.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:25:57 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolina Paulon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is women's rights to choose which birth attendants they would like to have as part of their care and not an imposition by the state. As is, Hawaii's midwifery is scarce and women who would like a home birth already find themselves with few options on care. By disabling traditional midwives and CPMs who obtained their license through the hands on program you will be shortening even more the choices that are available for women forcing many to give birth by themselves in order to protect their right of a home birth experience on their terms.

On top of that, disabling traditional midwives from working is contributing to structural racism which the midwifery community has known for many years of and we should not be going back there in 2023 neither in 2025.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:25:49 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachael Kuoha	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant people and their babies.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:28:49 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Madalyn Potter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:28:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melodi Stockton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:26:35 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jan Nishimoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill because it is not safe for pregnant women and their babies.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:30:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Russell Stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

My name is Dr. Russell Stewart and I am a Pastor in Kaneohe . Our Church has had a Midwife ministry since inception in 2000 and continuing still today. We, as a Christian Church, as in the Jewish religion, have a history of traditional Midwives in our faith and Church structure for thousands of years. The Office of a Midwife is given to us by our Scriptures in the Book of Exodus chapter 12 as well as elsewhere. Midwives are equal in ministers' status to a Pastor, Evangelist, Apostle, prophet , or any other ministry position in the Church. This has also been the case in the Kingdom of Hawaii with Christianity being the only recognized religion of the Kingdom as written in the 1840 Hawaiian Kingdom's Constitution stating that "No law shall be passed that is abhorant to the Word of God" which is the Bible. Please understand that it is our 1st Amendment Right to worship and practice our religion without any Government infringement. This Law (HB-955) will assure that our Constitutional Right is NOT infringed upon by the State of Hawaii. I am 100% in favor of passing this bill and will instruct other churches to do the same with their congregations. Please honor our Constitutional right as well as our traditional practices both as Christians and as Hawaiians. Respectfully. Dr. Russell Stewart

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:34:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melania Aghakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:36:50 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lucille Franco-Eharis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A women's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices."

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:37:04 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Schmutz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:37:56 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicole Struempf	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair an Committee members,

I strongly support HB955

My mom is a licensed midwife in Hawai'i. I watched her give birth to my younger 4 siblings at home under the care of a traditional midwife, this type of midwives is who I hope to be able to choose when I have my babies! Please keep traditional birth attendants legal!

It is also really important that we allow portfolio evaluation process credentialed certified professional midwives to become licensed! They are very valid to our community and the majority of the Midwives license in the state of Hawaii right now went through the PEP process themselves. We need to open in Access Midwifery care not limited.

it is also really important that we allow portfolio evaluation process credentialed certified professional midwives to become licensed! They are very valid to our community and the majority of the Midwives license in the state of Hawaii right now went through the PEP process themselves. We need to open access to midwifery care not limited.

Please support HB955

Thank you!

Nicole Struempf

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:33:17 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paolo Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

PEP trained midwives likewise need to be allowed to obtain a license to practice midwifery. They are highly trained and have taken the same exam as a meac school graduate.

mahalo for supporting this bill!

Paolo Morgan

Kailua-Kona

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:40:23 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jesse Parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:49:13 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mallory Josh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a mother of 2 and feel it is incredibly important to have options for women to choose their birth attendants. Women have a right to their bodies and how they bring their babies into the world and who is present. By putting legislation on who can attend and support birthing women could make women feel as though they don't have options and potentially change their experience and directly affect the mother baby bond.

Aloha e Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and members of the committee,

**I STAND IN STONG SUPPORT OF HB955 RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES (Midwifery)**

First of all, I would like to really thank you for taking the time on your agenda to schedule this very important reproductive rights bill. As we see on a national level, our reproductive rights are being increasingly diminished and challenged, it is more important than ever that Hawaii uphold a birthing person's autonomy to make decisions that strengthen, rather than limit, our access to birth choices.

As a practicing birth and labor support professional, I deeply understand that culturally appropriate care is integral to positive birth outcomes and must reflect the multitude of needs in our community. All birthing persons have the inalienable human right to choose their preferred birth attendant and location.

As outlined in this bill, please:

- Extend/codify the existing exemptions for traditional birth attendants to continue practicing.
- Allow all Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) to be eligible for licensure by expanding the current qualifications for licensure to include the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process (PEP) as a legitimate way for students to obtain a CPM certification and allows for a local pathway for those seeking licensure.

I am so grateful to see that the Committee on Health and Homelessness finds “that traditionally-trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and preferred by some consumers, and that the type of birth attendant utilized at a birth should be the birthing person's choice. Your Committee further finds that Act 32, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, inadvertently omitted a category of professional midwives who have completed the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process. This measure is intended to broaden the pool of people birthing persons may have to assist them at birth by including the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation as proof of successful completion of a formal midwifery education and training program for certified professional midwives.”

Thank you for your service and for the opportunity to testify; I urge you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Laura Acasio

Former State Senator, Labor Support Professional & Certified Lactation Counselor

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:49:01 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel L. Curnel Struempf DEM	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and Committee members,

I am in strong support of HB955

I am the first licensed midwife in the state of Hawai'i. I am also a member of the Hawai'i Homebirth Taskforce, the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, and the Hawai'i Midwifery Council. I received 100% of my midwifery training in Hawai'i. I was Credentialed through the portfolio evaluation process. This pathway is very much needed and the midwives credentialed in this manner deserve to continue to seek a state license.

The traditional birth attendant is also very much needed in Hawai'i. I practice on Hawai'i island and the licensed midwives are absolutely unable to serve all of the rural communities of our island. For the safety of birthing families, these traditional birth attendants need to be exempted from licensure permanently. We don't want these women birthing alone, unassisted 2+ hours from the hospital.

Please support HB955

Thank you!

Rachel Curnel Struenpf, LM, CPM

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:50:00 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Choua Oshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and committee members,

I continue to offer full support of HB955 HD 1, with recommendation that the July 1, 2025 date be executed to match Oregon' and other states laws that allow permanent exemptions for traditional & cultural practices.

My family and I have had 3 successful, empowering healthy homebirths in the comfort of our home with the providers we choose.

It is every woman's right to choose with whom and where she feels most safe to birth, please don't take this right away.

Thank you.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:50:51 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Rahm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I fully support practice of midwifery. I had heard of Kiana’s name recommended by other mothers within the Maui community. A few months later, when we were searching for a midwife or doula, my husband and I were introduced to Charlene Kiana Rowley from our friends. We met Kiana and the team from Sisterhood Midwifery for a total of 10 prenatal appointments between 8/25/21 and 1/31/22, while also receiving dual care from Kaiser. We were provided 9 postpartum care appointments from Kiana and Sisterhood Midwifery and continually go to Kaiser’s pediatrician appointments.**

**Kiana explained that there are many unknowns and requires certain level of responsibility, trust, and commitment from both parties, including us. This is well stated in her agreement as well. She carefully explained her licensure status and her experiential background. We felt comfortable, safe, and fully trusted in her knowledge and expertise. We originally wanted to work with her as we were going to do a hospital birth and she was going to accompany us to the hospital. With her previous experience as a Labor, Delivery, Postpartum nurse at Castle Medical Center on Oahu as well as her having delivered about 100 home birth babies, we felt we were in the best of hands since she had both hospital and home birth experiences. Towards the end of our pregnancy, we decided to have a home birth since the hospital only allowed 1 support person, due to COVID restrictions, which did not allow Kiana to accompany us. I had a very healthy pregnancy with no signs of any complications. We had Kiana, along with 2 other support doulas who delivered our baby in our comfort of our home without any complications.**

**We have had the care of both midwifery and Kaiser appointments to compare. Kaiser’s doctor appointments averaged about 10-15 minutes. They measured my weight, urine sample at each appointment and gave us paperwork on what to expect in the next few weeks. My questions were answered in quick 2 sentence replies. The 2 appointments with ultrasounds lasted longer at 60 minutes. The doctors and nurses were all kind, however, I was one out of hundreds of pregnant women. Just another appointment in their busy day.**

**Kiana and the Sisterhood Midwifery spent 2-4 hours at each one of the prenatal and postpartum appointment. They took their time to answer every one of our questions with care. We had many uncertainty and doubt as this was our first pregnancy. We were overwhelmed by the many resources available about childbirth and after each appointment, we felt confident, secure, empowered, and excited. The work and service that Kiana and the Sisterhood Midwifery offers, you cannot find in clinics and hospitals. They**



**truly do care and offer the best possible care, not only the physical aspect of the pregnancy, but also checks in how we both were doing emotionally and mentally, addressing the holistic picture. If I were to get pregnant again, I would definitely ask Kiana and the Sisterhood Midwifery for another pregnancy and postpartum support.**

**Naomi Rahm**

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:51:09 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kehaulani Avicolli	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha nui,

As a Native Hawaiian, mother, and practicing Birth Worker I strongly support this bill HB955 because our God-given CHOICE must be honored and protected. It is not up to the government to decide who is "allowed" to attend a birth and to regulate where a birth takes place. That choice is a private and individualized decision that holds generations of wisdom, safety, health, and sacred practices that are culturally, spiritually, and emotionally rooted. We support all homebirth attendants despite licensure, to support families that value their highly trained and skilled expertise to welcome new life and care for the family. In my personal experience attending and supporting births for the last 7 years, I have seen significantly better outcomes of those that chose to have a trusted midwife/birth support in attendance, than those that birthed in a hospital. If we are FOR the people, then our freedom and right to choose must be upheld and honored. Please hear our testimonies and take them to heart, as this not only affects us now, but for generations to come. Mahalo for your time!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:51:24 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kahikilaniwahinemaika'i'opuna Niles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support Bill HB955. Please let us women continue to have the choice to have home births. It is an indigenous cultural practice which is protected by the Hawaii constitution.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:52:22 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Farrell	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and esteemed members of the CPC Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to weigh in on this important topic.

When Act 32 was moving through the legislature in 2019, I worked as a legislative aid and did an exhaustive amount of research on this topic. I discovered several red flags that haven't yet been addressed in the discussion. Given the serious nature of infant mortality that is associated with this topic, I would like to share my findings in the hope it will assist you in making a sound decision.

There were three main areas of concern.

- Most research coming from the United States on home births had conclusions that were in direct opposition to international research and that of the World Health Organization.
- States with the most restrictions on midwives had the highest infant mortality rates.
- There were two types of midwife legislation being introduced around 2019 into today. The first were in states with an increase in home births who were introducing laws similar to Act 32. The second was in states where midwifery was illegal. These states were attempting to bring midwives back, in an attempt to lower infant mortality.

The data from other developed countries in Europe and Canada found that in most cases, home births were as safe or safer than those performed in a hospital. This was due to the reduced risk of unneeded interventions and better prenatal and postnatal care.

The majority of research done on homebirths in the United States comes from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), which has been advocating against home

births since the 1970s. While their professional interest in the subject doesn't necessarily mean there is a bias, it is disconcerting that their results are in direct contrast to all other research.

There are several reasons this could be happening. The focus has been on the advantages of hospital births and don't encompass the nuances of the issue. The United States medical system is very complex and there are 50 different systems for handling home births. Most importantly, the way they aggregate the data has home births painted with a broad all encompassing brush, while hospital births are divided in more specific sub-sections. While there is nothing wrong with grouping results this way, it makes it impossible to accurately compare the two.

For these reasons I found the ACOG studies less credible and weighed unbiased sources more heavily.

This brings me to the second issue. States with the most restrictive midwife laws had the highest infant mortality rates. This is confirmed by CDC data. This is consistent with the United Nations, World Health Organization and European healthcare systems findings that homebirths with a qualified midwife have better health outcomes for the mother and child. The correlation between these factors were confirmed in a 2018 study that found states that had the most support for midwives had the best health outcomes (Vedam, et al, 2018). Canadian research hypothesized that the issues with the homebirths in the United States were a result of the lack of integration of home births into the health care system.

Last, I found that there were several states with similar legislation to Hawaii back in 2019. These were due to an increase in home births. Conversely, Alabama passes legislation in 2017 to allow for the licensing of midwives for the first time since 1976. It is notable that Alabama consistently has some of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. Illinois, who also is one of the states with the highest infant mortality rates, also passed legislation to reverse their prohibition on midwives in 2021.

One thing that is notable is the recent introduction of midwife certification legislation has followed and increase in homebirths. The increase in homebirths has been a response to a dramatic increase in cesarian section births. The WHO issued guidance that the natural C-Section rate should be around 6% of all births. The rate of C-sections in the United States has ballooned to nearly 30% of all births in the last two decades.

Bills like the one that became Act 32 are successful in one thing, they create an additional barrier to entry into the marketplace. Act 32 will certainly benefit hospital birth rates and OBGYNs. CDC data and research suggest, that it will have adverse effect on birth outcomes.

I don't know enough about Oregon Law to weigh in on the specific merits. I can say with confidence that if Act 32 is allowed to stand as it is, it is predictable that infant mortality rates will increase in Hawaii.

I hope you will take this into consideration when deciding what to do with HB955

Below are some of the links to the findings that pertain the most to this discussion.

**U.S. States with more support for midwives have better birth outcomes.**

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-childbirth-midwives/u-s-states-with-more-support-for-midwives-have-better-birth-outcomes-idUSKCN1GL2ZI>

Link to the study <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0192523>

Link to CDC infant mortality rates

[https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant\\_mortality\\_rates/infant\\_mortality.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm)

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:54:30 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allison Gonzalez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support midwives and traditional birth attendants to continue to serve our community as they have for generations

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:55:46 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer S Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 955 HD1. Let women choose who they want to attend their birth. Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:56:22 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kahoku Baker Calventas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:56:57 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lars Ojukwu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Midwifery has been a time honored practice in many communities and without it, we lose so much in terms of who we are as people. More than anything else, we are looking incorporate all birth practitioners and allow them to practice to the fullest extent under the law so that these options for birthing are safer for EVERYONE.

I have a family member that works in this field and is looking to continue to bring beautiful like into this world in the way many many families have chosen to do so. Not supporting this could make the work she is doing illegal!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:58:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charles Hook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:58:56 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alex	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee chairs,

As your community, I urge you to vote in support of HB955 and its amendments. We must protect the choices of our families in choosing the provider that is right for them and not criminalize what our community sees as valuable care. From a student midwife perspective, I have heard a lot of misinformation in regards to licensure pathways. I am currently enrolled in a MEAC accredited program that requires, in addition to the didactic portion of my education, apprenticeship with a licensed midwife in the state we are practicing. Opposition to this bill will minimize opportunities for current and prospective students seeking licensure to gain the required apprenticeship hours by criminalizing midwives in our communities who ARE providing culturally competent care and fulfill the requirements of MEAC accredited educational program. From my personal experience, traditional midwives and other direct entry midwives I have worked with are more than qualified and educated in providing care to families who choose homebirth.

please support this bill and allow traditional midwives to work together with the legislature to develop common standards and accountability measures to continue to care for our families. The answer of midwifery regulation will not be found in the criminalization of an entire community of wise birth workers. We must work together to find a middle ground and preserve knowledge and care from a woman-centered perspective.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:00:25 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniela Martinez Guzman	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha honorable chair and committee members,

I'm a midwife on Oahu. And I have an important reminder for you.

Act 32- the current midwifery licensing law- states the following:

“This act also exempts a separate category of birth attendants for a three-year period, to allow this community to define themselves and develop common standards, accountability measures, and disclosure requirements. By the end of the three-year period, the legislature intends to enact statutes that will incorporate all birth practitioners and allow them to practice to the fullest extent under the law.”

Passing HB955- and thus allowing birth attendants to continue practicing, is the pre-agreed path by legislatures.

We are at the end of this three-year period. Without the passing of HB955 our birth attendants will become illegal. The intent of exempting birth attendants for 3 years is crystal clear- it was to allow them to create statues to allow them to continue practicing and serving the community. The three-year exemption was not to give birth attendants time to become licensed.

Act 32 also required that a Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force (HHBTF) be created to work on establishing such recommendations for a statute. The HHBTF collected statistics from midwives on all islands. Those statistics were corroborated with the Department of Health. Their

investigations found that home birth outcomes in Hawai'i during a time of no licensure were very favorable. You can see those statistics for yourself here:

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

So even though unlicensed birth attendants may sound concerning to you- the numbers speak for themselves.

The HHBTF was tasked with creating recommendations to preserve birth attendants. They did just that. You can read that full Task Force Report here: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FINAL-12.10.19-HHBTF-Report-12.11.19.pdf>

Of course this was created in 2019 so its use of provider terms is different from the current bill. I'm just pointing out that a lot of effort has gone into creating a plan for birth attendants as it was asked by legislators.

There are currently 28 licensed midwives in Hawai'i. At least 4 don't live here. And only ~14 are actively attending home births. On Oahu there are only 2 licensed midwives actively attending home births- I'm one of them. We have at least 3 birth attendants on Oahu that won't be able to continue practicing if this bill doesn't pass.

There's already a shortage of midwives throughout the islands. Without the passing of HB955 the few options currently available will further diminish. And further drive disparities.

By now you've likely heard of the increasing neonatal and maternal mortality rate in Hawai'i (and the USA). That fact is not because 1% of babies are born at home. It's due to many compounding factors affecting the 99% of births that occur in hospitals.

I know it may sound scary to you to have unlicensed birth attendants. I know you would likely personally prefer a licensed midwife- or more likely a hospital birth altogether with obstetricians. And I'm so grateful that your personal preference is the predominating culture and a legally protected option. Please understand that there are people who feel just as strongly about birthing with a birth attendant as you likely do about birthing with an obstetrician. And I ask of you to

respect and preserve the option of the minority culture to access their preferred birth provider-  
even if you personally don't like it.

And lastly, there are other states supporting such an exemption. Those include Oregon,  
Minnesota, Utah and Oklahoma.

Mahalo for your consideration and time,

Daniela Martinez Guzman

LM-26

md44@hawaii.edu

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:59:05 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alohi Aea	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Mahalo to the Committee for hearing this very important bill, which will allow families across Hawai'i to continue to have access to birth practitioners whose knowledge extends beyond that taught in western and American schools.

This bill is important for several reasons.

1. It will provide a pathway for those who are interested in pursuing licensure in the future to attain it WITHOUT leaving Hawai'i. The PEP process will allow future midwives to be licensed by training under preceptors in Hawai'i. Without this law, ALL midwives in the future will need to leave Hawai'i in order to be licensed.

2. Contrary to some belief and opinion, the provisions provided in the 2019 law that protect Native Hawaiian practitioners ARE NOT SUFFICIENT. A) There are currently NO practicing birth attendants who are exempt under Papa Ola Lokahi and B) this exemption, when it is enacted by POL, will NOT protect birth keepers of other cultural traditions. These traditions MUST be protected as they represent millenia of knowledge that has been gathered by practitioners from around the world.

3. Traditional midwives, Traditional Birth Attendants, whatever they will be called, will BECOME ILLEGAL AND WILL BE UNABLE TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY after July of this year. We are already seeing mothers who desire their services being turned away by these very important women who serve our birthing community.

I have chosen three times (soon to be four) to develop a birth team for myself and my family that includes birth practitioners who will be affected by this law. This law is not just about those who will be allowed to **practice** beyond July of 2023 if it is passed.

This law is about insuring access to practitioners-at the heart of the law are **consumers**, women and families like mine who want to be able to choose who they birth with. The regulations laid forth for birth attendants insure true informed consent, which is a critical part of all health care decisions. The removal of the July 2023 date will allow consumers continued access. Providing for a PEP pathway allows those who want to serve our community, now and in the future, to have a more affordable and equitable opportunity to do so.



I am grateful to this committee for hearing this bill. Please continue to stand for reproductive rights and freedoms by allowing women such as myself the opportunity to make choices for our own bodies.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:13:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melissa Lawrence	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a practicing OBGYN in Hawaii for the past 20 years. I believe the decision to have a home birth is a right all women should maintain and that these women should be medically informed about the risks and benefits associated with this choice. It is well known to the obstetric profession that a home birth is associated with a 2x increase in perineatal death and 3x increase in newborn seizures and neurologic disorders. Labor and delivery can be an unpredictable setting and complications while rare, are serious and can be debilitating. Timely intervention is necessary for a favorable outcome. I believe there should be absolute contraindications to a home birth and all pregnant women should have adequate prenatal care to identify any serious comorbidities that would not make it safe to have a home birth. These births should be attended by a certified and licensed midwife who has had adequate training and experience to select appropriate candidates, recognize and manage problems as they arise during labor and delivery, and provide timely transport to a medical facility when necessary. It is my hope that the home birth community and hospital professionals are able to work together to create a healthy alliance and keep our local community safe.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:16:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Claire Santos, MS, RN	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Rep. Bellatti and Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to HB955 as it is written. The document has become a convoluted tome that is difficult to track and which mistakenly groups unlicensed midwives with registered nurses and registered nurse midwives. The bill also is absent a basic foundational framework of competency requirements that would include critical components such as the training, education, supervision and accountability of unlicensed midwives.

I do understand the necessity for alternative healthcare delivery in rural areas, but dropping the current standard of practice can never be the right answer. I grew up in a rural farm town made up of European immigrants who held onto their varied cultural beliefs and practices. There was one general practice physician for the entire town. My own parents were dairy farmers who worked 7 days a week. Two of my older sisters were delivered at home with my Dad assisting my Mom, whether for financial reasons or because labor progressed too quickly (or Mom was helping at the farm until the last minute). Fortunately there were no complications with their 4th and 5th daughters' arrivals. That was in 1946 and 1948, respectively.

It's 2023. Let's be 21st century and recognize that home deliveries can have complications for which any birth attendant must be formally trained and prepared to anticipate and to respond, and with a plan for emergency transport to an advanced care facility and health management. First, let's get the language, standard requirements, hierarchies and accountabilities established.

Mom and baby's safety must be the first guiding factor. Please make effort toward correcting, clarifying and creating the plan for exactly how unlicensed midwives are to engage - before granting unrestricted practice rights to "anyone."

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Claire P. Santos, MS, RN, NHDP-BC

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:16:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nakita Kawai	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and my name is Nakita Kawai. I am 35 years old and gave birth to my child at 17 years of age. Yes, I was a teen mom. Although my birth was in the hospital I'd like to share the time leading up to that point. While in labor I had the privilege of having a family friend join me. So it was not my first instinct to have her join me until that early morning shift 2004 when I felt my first contractions. The fears I had not only as a teen mom, but a first time mother not knowing what I was about to experience. Because of her I had a beautiful labor experience at home with my family and felt safe I was never in harms way I was never in danger. In fact, the complete opposite. Unfortunately, I was not able to have a natural birth, but when the time was right, I knew because she told me now is the time to go to the hospital, at that point in time is when my experience changed, there was nurses I was surrounded by machines by tens I was now no longer in labor but I felt as if I was a patient with no say I did not want to be hooked up to machines, but I had to. I did not want to be in pain in an uncomfortable position, but I had to , if it wasn't for her, I would not have had one of the most important days of my life be such a blessed day I will forever be grateful for her. I am not too sure about what this bill will do for the future, but it is to take away the ability for someone to be able to be a part of another woman's birth experience. I do not agree I do not agree that our choice of how we would like to bring our child into this world is taken away again I do not agree. I thank you for your time and your consideration Aloha from Hawaii.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:17:22 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noelle purvis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi! I live in Puna. Please support access to birth attendants. Mahalo

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:18:00 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Schulte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:20:21 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Murphy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB955! All families, and especially women, must be able to make choices that determine the health and well-being of their children. The ability to choose a traditional midwife is an integral piece for the health and comfort of the birthing mother, and preserves traditional cultural practices that are being lost to the world. Legislating away one's ability to make a choice in one of the most sensitive and vulnerable moments of their life would be a tragedy for mother's, children, and traditional wisdom carriers in the state of Hawaii.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:29:44 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jaime Schrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. As a woman that intends to have a child it is very important to me that I have the the option of having a traditional midwife as my birth attendant. A medicalized hospital birth would be my last choice and only if circumstances demanded it. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Aloha,

Jaime Schrack



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:19:49 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jean M Miskovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB955, HD1. Woman must continue to have the freedom to choose who they entrust to attend them during birth. Thank you.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:21:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Allison Miles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha e Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and members of the committee,**

**I STAND IN STONG SUPPORT OF HB955 RELATING TO CHAPTER 457J, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES (Midwifery)**

**I am so grateful to see that the Committee on Health and Homelessness finds “that traditionally-trained birth attendants of all cultures are valued and preferred by some consumers, and that the type of birth attendant utilized at a birth should be the birthing person's choice. Your Committee further finds that Act 32, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, inadvertently omitted a category of professional midwives who have completed the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation process. This measure is intended to broaden the pool of people birthing persons may have to assist them at birth by including the North American Registry of Midwives portfolio evaluation as proof of successful completion of a formal midwifery education and training program for certified professional midwives.”**

**Thank you for your service and for the opportunity to testify; I urge you to pass this bill.**

**Allison Miles, constituent of Puna district, Hawaii island**

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 2:59:29 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith I Ojukwu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”

Aloha Committee Chair & Committee members,

I am Judith O. I was born and raised in Hawaii and returned to live for the past 8 years. I strongly support HB955.

Since my return to Hawaii, I have had the luxury of birthing under the guidance, love and support of midwifery care. I had a natural home birth experience with a traditional midwife present as well as PEP training students in assistance. Access to midwifery care improves health outcomes and safety for all birthing people and their children. I support the continuation of the Birth Attendant exemption and the addition of the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), certified by the National Association of Registered Midwives (NARM) to be included in HRS 457-J.

These exemptions allow for the profession of Midwifery to continue to grow in equitable ways, allowing accessibility, diversity, and cultural and religious freedom for Hawai’i.

After July 2023, the temporary exemption is set to expire, criminalizing midwifery practitioners who are filling a vital need in our communities. I support the sovereignty of midwifery to continue through traditional apprenticeship pathways in Hawai’i.

The perpetuation of community-based apprenticeship for the training of midwives is essential for safety and equitable access to midwifery care for all people, especially Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color families today and for future generations.

Please Support Birth Attendant Exemption and the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) for Hawai’i. Maintain a pathway for local people to learn traditional practices of health and healing from elders in their own communities.

Thank you for reading my testimony,

Judith

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:31:18 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Diana Forsell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:35:30 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sanja	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Sanja Tratar STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

mahalo!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 4:14:58 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ize Goodfriend	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Allowing for a regulated professional class of midwives ensures that people who choose to give birth at home are attended to by qualified practitioners. Midwives are culturally important, and their profession will endure regardless of state acceptance. If the people desire what the state disallows, the desires of the people will be fulfilled under cover of night, where there is no protection from malfeasance. Full scale state approval of midwifery empowers the state to grant licenses to the well-trained and the rigorously vetted, and to bar pretenders from practice. As a Maui native, born at home and delivered by midwives, my life, and the lives of my siblings born similarly, are a testament to the craft of midwifery - a craft as old as human childbirth. With or without legal protection, people will exercise their natural right to give birth where they will and with whom they will. This legal protection only makes our birthing people safer by providing a framework for qualification.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:59:41 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kira Fox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a registered nurse liscensed here in Hawaii, and I support the practice of traditional midwives here in Hawaii.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 4:42:51 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayzsa Konohia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman’s right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman’s birth choices.”



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 4:17:43 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chandler Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I can't believe this is even a debate. The way in which a woman chooses to deliver her baby shouldn't be decided by anyone. Having a natural home birth is very sacred to many people and I hope to one day have one.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 4:59:06 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Martha Harkey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB955 to allow women the right to have a traditional midwife to deliver their baby.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:07:01 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Monica Halenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:50:24 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Breana Perreira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:50:15 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices. A mother should be able to choose and honestly all my friends who had home births and hospital births say that home births are a thousand times better and safer for your babies. It might not be the choice for all but it's is a mothers choice!

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 4:57:49 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kawehilani Kuahiwinui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Kawehilani Kuahiwinui and I will be testifying in support of HB955. I believe the women of Hawai'i should have a choice in who brings their keiki into the world.

When I found out I was pregnant I was afraid of having to give birth in the hospital, at that time I was not aware that we had midwives on Hawai'i Island. I later found out through my aunty that she assisted a midwife here on the big island and that if I wanted, I could have my baby at home or at the birth house and I immediately called her and booked an appointment to meet and talk with her. She was amazing, she was so confident in herself. I had my daughter in the comfort of my home surrounded by the people I love. It was an amazing experience for my self. It was nothing like what they say it is like to give birth in the hospital. Throughout my pregnancy I built a relationship with my midwife and trusted her wholeheartedly. She kept me calm, talked me through every step, and she always made sure the baby and I were healthy before and after giving birth.

I felt the need to testify because I would really love to have the option of having my future keiki at home and would love for other women to have the same experience if they wish to. Every women should be allowed to have that choice.

Thank you.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 5:14:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jackson Emory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Women should be able to decide how they give birth. It is their literal birthright.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:53:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christina Kaialilii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A women's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a women's birth choices.

Thank you for your time



**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:19:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alicia Gleason	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB955. A woman's right to choose a TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE for her birth should be protected! Government has no right to dictate a woman's birth choices.

**HB-955-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 6:58:43 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/15/2023 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Yang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OBGYN resident training in Hawai'i. I've had the joy of working with wonderfully trained and knowledgeable midwives in this community. But as an obstetrician, I've also experienced the incredible art of managing very high risk and complex pregnancies and deliveries, and I still have much more training, much more learning to do. I don't believe we as physicians do everything right all the time, but I know we have a standard of training to strive towards. We are constantly evaluated and held accountable when we are not performing the standard or evidence based care. Our pregnant patients deserve to be informed about the care that can provide them and their babies the best outcomes. If we remove a standard of training and knowledge for birth attendants in Hawai'i, how can our patients know if they are receiving the optimal care, or even safe and ethical care?

There are international standards for midwifery training, and training to such standards is available in the state of Hawai'i. Rather than lowering the standard of midwifery to practice nonstandardized care, I urge the committee to make midwifery training and licensure more accessible. I urge you to vote NO on HB955-D1, but instead put this effort towards expanding midwifery training and licensure more accessible.