

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 9, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
House Committee on Health

The Honorable Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1328 – RELATING TO MIDWIVES.**

Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure, offers comments, and respectfully requests an amendment that Medicaid coverage be contingent on appropriate federal approvals.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to provide for the continued licensure of certified midwives and certified professional midwives by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; Identify the scope of practice for a licensed midwife, including the ability to provide independent midwifery services in hospitals, clinics, freestanding birthing facilities, community birthing facilities, community birthing settings, and the home; Clarify that the services of licensed midwives are eligible for insurance reimbursement; Prohibit persons from identifying as certified midwives or certified professional midwives, unless those persons are appropriately licensed; and Temporarily re-establish the home birth task force to provide

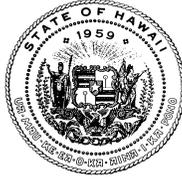
additional recommendations on issues related to home births. Dissolves the task force on 6/30/2026. Requires reports to the Legislature.

DHS appreciates the continued licensure of certified midwives and certified professional midwives, including clarifying the scope of practice for midwives. Through the Medicaid managed care plans, Med-QUEST provides coverage for thousands of mothers and babies each year. However, access to care can be difficult, especially for families living on neighbor islands. Midwives can expand access to pre- and post-natal care, as well as care for the infant.

Proposed section 457J-O (on page 41, lines 16 through page 42, line 2) requires any health benefit plan or health insurance, “including the Medicaid program, to provide coverage for services rendered by a licensed midwife if the services rendered are within the scope of practice for a certified midwife or certified professional midwife, without regard to the location where the services were provided.” Although DHS is supportive of coverage for services provided by licensed midwives, several administrative steps would be required prior to such coverage. This includes the development of rates for services, possible addition of new provider types, and getting approval from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for State Plan Amendment(s) (SPA). Without CMS approvals, any coverage would not qualify to receive federal Medicaid matching funds. DHS is willing to submit the necessary SPAs. However, it is unknown if or how long such approval will take. For this reason, we request an amendment that Medicaid coverage be contingent on appropriate federal approvals.

This measure also creates a temporary Home Birth Task Force to include a DHS Med-QUEST representative. The Task Force is to discuss and report back to the Legislature on the education and training of birth practitioners; public health education and information regarding home birth practices; data and information regarding home births and maternal and infant health; Issues arising when transport is needed from home births to hospital care; and proposed actions to improve public health and safety in relation to home births. Med-QUEST is happy to serve on this Task Force.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 1328
RELATING TO MIDWIVES**

REPRESENTATIVE GREGG TAKAYAMA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

REPRESENTATIVE SCOT Z. MATAYOSHI, CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Hearing Date, Time and Room Number: 02/10/2025, 2:00PM, CR 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (“Department”) requests a general fund
- 2 appropriation of \$50,000 to fulfill the reimbursement of travel expenses for task force members
- 3 required by this measure and to hire professional facilitators. The Department requests that
- 4 this measure be considered as a vehicle to provide this needed funding so long as it does not
- 5 supplant the priorities and requests outlined in the Governor’s executive budget request.
- 6 **Department Position:** The Department provides comments and a recommended amendment.
- 7 **Department Testimony:** The Family Health Services Division (FHSD) provides the following
- 8 testimony on behalf of the Department.
- 9 The Department defers to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs on the
- 10 administration, licensing, and/or regulation of midwives.
- 11 The Department agrees to provide the administrative and clerical support required by the
- 12 home birth task force provisions of this measure, including preparation and submission to the
- 13 legislature, on behalf of the home birth task force, a report of findings, recommendations, and

1 any proposed legislation. The report will be submitted no later than twenty days prior to the
2 convening of the regular session of 2026.

3 Part III, Section 4. (g) on page 46 of the measure states that task force members "...shall be
4 reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their
5 duties." Although not mentioned, an appropriation of \$50,000 would fund professional
6 facilitators and fulfill the reimbursement of travel expenses for home birth task force members
7 from the neighbor islands.

8 Based on the specialized topic and comprehensive membership of this task force, it may be
9 difficult to recruit members that currently work together on related health issues as part of
10 their employment or associations if they will be prohibited from continuing these professional
11 interactions during their tenure on the task force based on Part I, Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised
12 Statutes. We recommend adoption of Office of Information Practices language to amend H.B.
13 1328 for a limited exemption to Part I, Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes that allows
14 interactions/discussions among home birth task force members that need to talk together
15 about the same issues the task force will be dealing with in the course of their regular work.

16 The Department welcomes the opportunity to convene the home birth task force to think
17 through how mothers can receive the birthing support appropriate for their needs and
18 expectations in as safe a manner as possible.

19 **Offered Amendment:**

20 ADD: SECTION 4. (l) Less than a quorum of task force members may discuss task force business
21 together outside a meeting provided that they report the matters discussed at the next duly
22 noticed meeting of the task force, and that no commitment to vote is made or sought. Such
23 discussions shall be a permitted interaction under Hawaii Revised Statutes §92-2.5.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Health and the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Monday, February 10, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1328, RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Alexander Pang, and I am the Executive Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Midwives Program. The Department appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments and concerns.

The purposes of this bill are to (1) continue a licensing scheme for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives, to be overseen by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; and (2) re-establish the home birth task force to provide recommendations on issues related to home births, to be dissolved on 6/30/2026, and require reports to the Legislature.

The Department appreciates this bill's intent to continue the licensing scheme for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives in the interest of public protection.

The Department is concerned about the proposed ability of a licensed midwife to delegate “any tasks within the licensed midwife’s scope of practice” to an “unlicensed assistive person” under the proposed Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Section 457J-F. While the bill states that “no delegated tasks shall require the delegate to exercise the judgment required of a licensed midwife,” the Department maintains that an unlicensed individual should not be performing tasks that require a midwife license , notwithstanding licensure exemptions provided by statute.

The proposed HRS 457J-G and 457J-H allow certified midwives and certified professional midwives to obtain and maintain prescriptive authority from the Department, separate from their licensure. The Department’s preference is that if a midwife qualifies for and maintains active licensure, then a midwife’s ability to practice to the full extent of their scope of practice should be part of the midwife’s license, rather than a separate prescriptive authority. This avoids placing administrative burdens on both licensed midwives and the Department. It is also unclear why HRS 457J-G mandates that each certified midwife’s prescriptive authority “shall be made available to the Hawaii medical board and the state board of pharmacy;” the Department requests that this requirement on page 27, lines 15-18 be removed.

The proposed HRS 457J-J contains licensure exemptions, including unlicensed persons providing limited perinatal support services such as lactation support providers and doulas under subsection (4), persons engaged in birth-related practices of any ethnic culture under subsection (8), and persons engaged in birth-related practices related to healing by prayer or spiritual means in connection with the tenets and practices of any well-recognized church or religious denomination under subsection (9). The Department proposes deleting these subsections and allowing these groups to instead use the “traditional birth attendant” exemption under subsection (10). The “traditional birth attendant” exemption requires that the traditional birth attendant make certain verbal and written disclosures to clients and maintain client disclosure forms for Department inspection for ten years. The Department posits that this disclosure requirement provides an extra layer of public protection. Additionally, the Department

Testimony of DCCA

H.B. 1328

Page 3 of 3

opposes the licensure exemption extending to hanai family under subsection (6), as this essentially extends a licensure exemption to an ill-defined group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIR
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

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DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
House Committee on Health
and
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Monday, February 10, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329

On the following measure:
H.B. 1328, RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Esther Brown, and I am the Complaints and Enforcement Officer of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) Regulated Industries Complaints Office (RICO). RICO offers **comments** and proposes amendments to only a narrow portion of the bill.

By way of background, RICO partners with the DCCA's professional and vocational licensing boards, commissions, and programs (Boards and Programs) to regulate specific industries for the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and with due consideration of the State's legitimate, law-abiding professional and vocational licensees. RICO's domain is limited to two independent enforcement responsibilities: performing investigative and prosecutorial functions for the Boards and Programs. The Boards and Programs set the standards for, and have final decision-making authority over, licensees in their respective industries. Therefore, we respectfully defer to the industry, and the Midwifery Program within the DCCA, on the remainder of the bill.

The bill defines and references an “unlicensed assistive person,” on page 16, line 12, and page 25, lines 8 to 9. Inclusion of the term in the bill, and allowing delegation of tasks to said person, violates the longstanding State policy that forbids the performance of any work requiring a license or certification, in any regulated profession or vocation, by persons who are not licensed or credentialed as such. The prohibition against unlicensed activity warrants civil and criminal liability,¹ and, a validly-credentialed licensee who aids, abets, permits, supervises, or otherwise allows an unlicensed person to perform tasks within that licensee’s scope of practice, faces substantial liability too including the possibility of losing the privilege of licensure.² Therefore, to protect the validly-licensed or credentialed person under this bill from aiding and abetting liability, and to safeguard persons who may not be aware of the ramifications of engaging in unlicensed activity, we offer the following amendments should this bill pass out of committee:

- At page 16, lines 12 to 15, deleting in its entirety the following sentence:
~~"Unlicensed assistive person" means a person who is not licensed to practice certified midwifery or certified professional midwifery but who can competently perform tasks delegated by a licensed midwife.~~
- Strike and delete the phrase “unlicensed assistive person” from anywhere else it may appear in the bill, including at page 25, lines 7 to 12.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

¹ The “unlicensed assistive person” who engages in delegated tasks falling within the practice scope of a credentialed licensee would face criminal and civil liability including equitable relief in the form of injunctions, as well as the possibility of paying attorney’s fees to the prevailing party. See sections 436B-27(b) and 436B-27(c), HRS.

² Sections 436B-27(a), HRS, and 436B-19(6), HRS, subject a professional or vocational licensee to civil liability, in the form of fines and action against the license such as suspension or even revocation, if the licensee knowingly permits or allows unlicensed activity.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1328
RELATING TO MIDWIVES

House Committee on Health
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 10, 2025

2:00 PM

Room 329

Dear Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Members of the House Committees on Health and Consumer Protection & Commerce:

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this very important bill concerning access to culturally competent birthing assistance for mothers and babies in Hawai'i. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT of HB1328**.

Traditionally, Po (The Great Night) having given birth to the light is the first practitioner of Hanau (birth) in Native Hawaiian genealogy, and Hanau (birth) should be considered our oldest cultural practice and tradition. For generations, as part of this genealogical connection, Native Hawaiian midwives and birth attendants, have, provided essential care rooted in 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge). However, state licensing laws have threatened these practices by regulating midwives in a way that risks criminalizing traditional birth care practices. **HB1328 corrects that harm by explicitly exempting Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners from licensing requirements applicable to midwives.**

Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI) suffer from disproportionately high rates of pregnancy related maternal deaths (defined as death during or within one year after pregnancy due to a condition caused or aggravated by pregnancy).¹ In 2017-2019 pregnant women who identified as NHOPI, suffered the highest rate of pregnancy related maternal deaths of any ethnic group across the county.² **This alarming death rate emphasizes the need to expand access to care for pregnant and**

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System, <https://www.cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/pregnancy-mortality-surveillance/index.html> (last visited February 9, 2025).

² See *id.*

post-partum women including through traditional practitioners trained to provide culturally competent birthing support and assistance.

OHA supports HB1328 as a vital step towards protecting traditional birth practices and increasing maternal health outcomes because it:

- Protects traditional Hawaiian birthing cultural practices and practitioners from criminalization for serving as birthing attendants.
- Protects a birthing person's right to choose any birthing attendant, including extended and hānai family members.
- Includes a PEP (apprenticeship and testing) pathway to licensure for local midwives who choose to pursue licensure and attendant privileges including the ability to prescribe medications. This is especially important for Native Hawaiian birthing practitioners, **none** of whom have yet been able to meet MEAC-based licensure requirements due to geographic barriers (no midwifery schools are located in Hawai'i). Expanding licensure pathways will ensure culturally competent midwives are more widely available.
- Supports Medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would benefit communities by increasing access to care.
- Addresses the maternal health crisis by increasing, rather than limiting available practitioners to serve the community, including culturally appropriate prenatal and postpartum care.

In closing, OHA recognizes the extensive community consultation and organizing that has gone into drafting HB1328 by individuals with the most firsthand experience as midwives and non-Western birthing practitioners. **HB1194, in contrast, does not have the same broad-based community support and does not include a clear exemption from regulation and criminalization for Native Hawaiian birthing practitioners.** Therefore, OHA does not support HB1194.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. OHA urges the Committee to consider and appropriately weigh this wealth of practitioner input and experience when considering the various bills addressing midwifery that are before you today and **PASS HB1328** out of Committee.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee



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

Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

COUNTY COUNCIL

Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 10, 2025

MEMO TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Chair Gregg Takayama and Vice Chair Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi and Vice Chair Cory M. Chun

F R O M: Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez

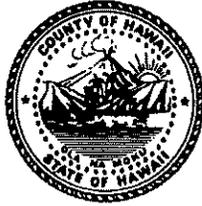
SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB1328 – RELATED TO MIDWIVES**

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB1328, relating to midwives.

- For the past two years, the Maui County Council has unanimously supported the right for our constituents to have the option of choosing traditional and customary midwives to attend their births, and provide care before and after labor.
- Without a viable option for Native Hawaiian traditional and customary healing and birthing practitioners to practice under Hawaii law, the legislature is regulating this practice out of existence, violating our constitution.

I respectfully request that both committees pass HB1328.

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 10, 2025
TO: House Committees on Health and Consumer Protection & Commerce
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 1328

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and members of the Committees,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1328. This is an accessibility issue for residents across our State and specifically for those residing in Hawai'i County. As the largest island with the most rural population we must have options for birthing support in ways that meet our people's unique needs. On December 18, 2024, the Hawai'i County Council passed Resolution 26-25, Urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to Amend Chapter 457J, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Relating to Midwives, to Permanently Exempt Birth Attendants from State Licensure Requirements and to Expand the Eligibility Criteria for Midwifery Licensure (see attached).

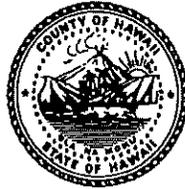
Under Act 32 (2019), (Section 457-J, Hawai'i Revised Statutes), threats of criminalization threaten indigenous midwifery and those who seek those services. Act 32 sunsets at the end of June, this year. We need a solution that protects reproductive freedoms and allows traditional and indigenous midwifery practices to be protected from risk of criminality or, worse, cultural erasure. HB 1328 will protect 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. HB 1328 address that oversight by providing multiple pathways to Certified Professional Midwifery licensure, including the nationally recognized Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) Plus Bridge apprenticeship program. We need more access to safe and knowledgeable midwifery care and this bill helps provide that.

Mahalo,

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

Jenn Kagiwada

RESOLUTION NO. 26 25

A RESOLUTION URGING THE HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE TO AMEND CHAPTER 457J, HAWAI'I REVISED STATUTES, RELATING TO MIDWIVES, TO PERMANENTLY EXEMPT BIRTH ATTENDANTS FROM STATE LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS AND TO EXPAND THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR MIDWIFERY LICENSURE.

WHEREAS, midwifery is one of the oldest women's rights issues in history, and a woman's right to choose where to give birth and who they want as their preferred birth attendant are integral to providing safety, care, bodily autonomy, and comfort during birth; and

WHEREAS, Act 32 (Senate Bill No. 1033, SD2, HD2), relating to the licensure of midwives, was signed into law on April 30, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Section 457J-6, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, established by Act 32, provides an exemption that allows birth attendants to practice midwifery without State licensure, however this exemption expired on July 1, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Act 32 specifically states that by the end of the three-year period, the Hawai'i State Legislature intends to enact statutes that will incorporate all birth practitioners and allow them to practice to the fullest extent under the law; and

WHEREAS, if the Hawai'i State Legislature fails to take action before this exemption expires, traditional and indigenous midwifery practices will be at risk of criminality or, worse, cultural erasure, and the traditional birthing practices of all cultures deserve protection; and

WHEREAS, additionally, Act 32 inadvertently omitted a category of Certified Professional Midwives, or CPMs, who have been trained and certified using the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), which is one of two pathways to obtain a professional midwife certification through the nationally recognized North American Registry of Midwives; and

WHEREAS, the second pathway to become a CPM is to complete a course study at a Midwifery Education Accreditation Council school, but there are currently no accredited schools in Hawai'i, therefore, the PEP pathway is the more accessible way for midwifery students in the State to obtain certification as a CPM; and

WHEREAS, expanding the eligibility criteria in Section 457J-8, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to allow CPMs certified through the PEP pathway to be licensed, will greatly benefit families throughout Hawai'i County, especially in rural areas like Kohala, Puna, Ka'u, and South Kona, where families have limited access to birth facilities and have depended on traditionally-trained birth attendants for decades; and

WHEREAS, a proposed State bill attached as Exhibit "A" was approved as part of the Hawai'i County Council Legislative Proposals and Priorities to be considered for inclusion in the 2025 Hawai'i State Association of Counties Legislative Package in Resolution 630-24, Draft 2; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF HAWAI'I that the Hawai'i State Legislature is urged to amend Chapter 457J, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, to permanently exempt birth attendants from State licensure requirements and to expand the licensure eligibility criteria to include all Certified Professional Midwives, including those who have been certified via the Portfolio Evaluation Process pathway.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the County Clerk shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; all members of the Hawai'i State Legislature; the Honorable C. Kimo Alameda, Mayor, County of Hawai'i; the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women; and the Hawai'i County Committee on the Status of Women.

Dated at Hilo, Hawai'i, this 18th day of December, 2024.

INTRODUCED BY:



 COUNCIL MEMBER, COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

COUNTY COUNCIL
 County of Hawai'i
 Hilo, Hawai'i

I hereby certify that the foregoing RESOLUTION was by the vote indicated to the right hereof adopted by the COUNCIL of the County of Hawai'i on December 18, 2024.

ATTEST:

 
 COUNTY CLERK CHAIRPERSON & PRESIDING OFFICER

ROLL CALL VOTE

	AYES	NOES	ABS	EX
GALIMBA	X			
HUSTACE	X			
INABA	X			
KAGIWADA	X			
KĀNEALI'I-KLEINFELDER	X			
KIERKIEWICZ			X	
KIMBALL	X			
ONISHI	X			
VILLEGAS	X			
	8	0	1	0

Reference: C-16/Waived GOEAC
 RESOLUTION NO. 26 25



**Testimony of the Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force Chair
And Board President of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective**

**Before the House Committee on Health and Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
2/10/25 at 2:00p.m.**

State Capitol, Via Video Conference, ROOM #329 HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Health and Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee:

My name is Kristie Duarte and I had the honor of serving as the Chair of the Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force created by Act 32 (2019). I am also the current Board President of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective. The Hawai'i Home Birth Collective is the largest midwife and birth worker organization in Hawai'i representing the largest membership of midwives licensed under HRS 457J as well as other licensed birth practitioners across the State. We offer our full **support of HB 1328 with additional comments on this bill.**

HB 1328 is the most comprehensive bill introduced which in its purpose for public interest: preserves licensure, expands access to obtaining licensure for Hawai'i residents reflective of national standards, and protects access to choice in maternal healthcare.

HB 1328:

- Fulfills the original intent of HRS 457J and allows for Reproductive Freedom
- Expands Access to Licensure
- Provides Hawai'i Residents and Out of State Midwives who move to Hawai'i equal access to multiple pathways to midwifery licensure
- Does not discriminate against Hawai'i Residents
- Fulfills intent of HRS 457j to incorporate all birth practitioners
- Creates a clear exemption for Native Hawaiian Traditional and Customary birthing practices that affirm Article 12 section 7 under the Hawai'i Constitution
- Fulfills intent of HRS 457j by providing religious and cultural protections relating to birthing practices
- Does not criminalize family members or other birth professionals
- Does not criminalize the birth attendant
- Authorizes licensed midwives to legally practice to the fullest extent of their scope based on training, education and credential

In addition to our support, we are respectfully asking for the following amendments to be made:

Add definitions for "Community Birth" & "Telehealth" based on ACNM Standards

- "Community birth" means birth taking place in a birth center, home, or location within the community.
- "Telehealth" means the use of telecommunications as that term is defined in section 269-1 including but not limited to real-time video conferencing-based communication, secure interactive and non-interactive web-based communication, and secure asynchronous information exchange, to transmit client health care information, including diagnostic-quality digital images and laboratory results for health care interpretation and diagnosis, for the purpose of delivering enhanced health care services and information to parties separated by distance. Standard telephone contacts, facsimile transmissions, or electronic mail texts, in combination or by themselves, do not constitute a telehealth service for the purposes of this chapter."

Add subsection on global signature authority:

- **Global signature authority.** Licensed midwives shall be authorized to sign, certify, or endorse all documents relating to health care provided for their clients within their scope of practice, including workers' compensation verification documents, temporary disability insurance forms, verification and evaluation forms of the department of human services and department of education, verification and authorization forms of the department of health, and physical examination forms; provided that nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the scope of practice of licensed midwives.

SECTION 4. Section 453-51, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, is amended by amending the definition of "health professional" to read as follows:

""Health professional" means any of the following:

(1) A person licensed or otherwise authorized by law to practice medicine or surgery under this chapter and whose scope of practice includes the diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases;

(2) An advanced practice registered nurse with prescriptive authority under chapter 457 and duly licensed in the State; ~~or~~

(3) A licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife or certified professional midwife with prescriptive authority under chapter 457J and duly licensed in the State; or

~~[(3)]~~ (4) For the purpose of dispensing antibiotic therapy under this section, a pharmacist who is licensed or otherwise authorized to engage in the practice of pharmacy under chapter 461."

Respectfully,

Kristie Duarte

President, Hawai'i Homebirth Collective

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:56:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Violet Aarona	Hawaii Home Birth Collective and Malama Na Pua o Haumea	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Violet Napualei'ilima Kapōhaiali'iokamāmalu Moanaliha Aarona. I was born and raised on the island of Maui and currently reside in Waiohuli Hawaiian homes. I am an apprenticing pale keiki and traditional midwife under my Aunty Kii Kahoohanohano. I work with Pacific Birth Collective with education and outreach for my community. I am a member of Hawai'i Home Birth Collective and Mālama Nā Pua 'o Haumea.

I'm writing today in support of Bill HB 1328 Expanding access to Midwifery and Maternal Health. Bill HB 1328 provides clear and effective solutions to Act 32 stated in 2019. It covers all birthing practitioners, clinical and traditional. It provides actual coverage for Native hawaiians and customary practices under the constitution. Which other bills in this session do not.

Bill HB 1194, although made with good intention, is still not a solution. It not only adds additional requirements for already licensed midwives but further requires mandatory data collection and an excess amount of additional restrictions on supervision and the clientele. Clients have to pay out of pocket for care they may need, and if they can't, then what? We don't serve them? Hewa. It also makes all customary practice regulated by the state, overriding our rights in the constitution to practice. La'au lapa'au, lomilomi, Ho'oponopono, Oli, Hula, all the things that make us, kanaka. Once again, regulated and controlled by those who won't even hear us.

But there is a real solution. Bill HB 1328. A bill that was worked on collectively for years with the hearts and hands of many from Traditional midwives to Licensed midwives, CPMs, CNMs, Cultural Practitioners, and so many more. That includes all types of midwives, allows them all to practice to the full extent of their scopes, education, and training. Opens up pathways for aspiring midwives such as myself, ones that are actually accessible and comfortable to me. The only pathway as of now is MEAC, an online course that is not accessible in Hawai'i. Meaning it forces me to move away from home and learn a traditional practice in a foreign way. This bill returns the PEP pathway, an apprenticeship program that takes the same exact test as MEAC pathway students. An apprenticeship model is not only a way for me to stay home but it is

customary where i'm from. Ma ka hana ka 'ike. In working, one learns. The best way to retain knowledge is in the doing, in community and conversation. 'O ia ka ha'awina a nā kupuna. That is the teaching of our kūpuna. That is the way of my people. We must continue it so i can continue to learn from my aunty and my kupuna and pass it on to my future keiki and all that come after them.

7 generations forward, 7 back. I'm standing here because of those before me, continuing to fight for things they died fighting for and tried to perpetuate. Just so that me, the 7th generation, can pass it on to the next 7 after me.

We have been in a maternal health crisis for way too long. We must give our practitioners back their freedom to practice as they've done so for years and those before them have done since the beginning of time. We must give back the choice and care these families deserve. We cannot continue to put our people in distress. You've promised to speak for our people, to stand with them and protect them. So please do so & support Bill HB1328.

Mahalo nui me ke aloha,

Violet Aarona



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org
pacificbirthcollective.org

‘Aloha ‘Āina Center
810 Kokomo Road # 240 & #170
Ha‘ikū, Hawai‘i 96708

PBC Board

February 7th, 2025

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Testimony in Support of Expanding and Equitable Access to Midwifery Care
Pacific Birth Collective Board of Directors

To: Hawai‘i State House of Representatives Committees on Health and Consumer Protection,

Re: Testimony in Support of HB1328

PBC Executive Team

Morea Mendoza
Director of Leadership & Operations

Becky Lind
Director of Finance

Mariah Strong
Director of Programs & Communications

Ki‘i Kaho‘ohanohano
Director of Advocacy & Cultural Programs

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

The Pacific Birth Collective Board of Directors submits this testimony in strong support of HB1328 to continue our midwifery licensing program and expand equitable access to midwifery care.

Key Considerations for Midwifery Regulation:

1. Regulation that Expands, Not Restricts, Access
 - The language in HB1328 has been reviewed and vetted by national certifying bodies, including the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) for CPMs and the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) for CMs.
 - Regulation should support the growth of the midwifery workforce, especially in underserved communities.
 - Midwifery education pathways—including the apprenticeship model—should remain accessible to ensure the sustainability of the profession.
 - Certified Midwife (CM) and Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) should have access to the necessary medications and tools to provide comprehensive care and for these services to be covered by insurance so that cost is not a barrier for families.
 - CM and CPMs need to be allowed to practice to the full extent of their education and training without unnecessary restrictions.



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org
pacificbirthcollective.org

‘Aloha ‘Āina Center
810 Kokomo Road # 240 & #170
Ha‘ikū, Hawai‘i 96708

2. Preserving Reproductive Autonomy & Informed Choice

- HB1328 has been endorsed and vetted by the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, Ea Hanau Cultural Council, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to ensure that it does not infringe on the constitutional rights of Native Hawaiians.
- Additionally, ACLU Hawai‘i, ACLU National, and the Center for Reproductive Rights have reviewed the language to ensure that it does not infringe on reproductive freedom.
- All birthing people have the right to:
 - informed consent and transparency
 - respectful care free of coercion and discrimination.
 - To choose where and with whom they give birth

Conclusion

As an organization serving families primarily on Maui, we have witnessed firsthand the **urgent need for more maternity care providers**. In recent years, our community has faced severe challenges, including:

- Rising **food and housing insecurity**
- The closure of **one of the primary OB-GYN clinics on Maui**
- A **shortage of maternal health providers**, leaving many families without adequate care

Midwives are Community Health providers who serve as **lifelines** for families struggling to access care. They provide **home-based support**, identify critical health and social needs, and serve as **first responders when families fall through the cracks**.

Pacific Birth Collective in 2024 distributed 981 total food boxes to 3,854 people, all families with pregnant women and children under 5 years old experiencing food insecurity. We served 197 families through our donation and distribution center and subsidised community health care including Midwifery, doula and Lactation support for 66 families. We did not even scratch the surface of the need in our community. This many families and



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org
pacificbirthcollective.org

‘Aloha ‘Āina Center
810 Kokomo Road # 240 & #170
Ha‘ikū, Hawai‘i 96708

more need these services on other islands as well. We **desperately need more midwives** from our own communities who understand these challenges firsthand.

We recognize that the intent and purpose of this hearing is to **ensure safety, expand access, and improve outcomes** for mothers and babies in Hawai‘i.

This issue rises above our political divides—it is a matter of **safety, equity, and reproductive autonomy**.

We urge the Legislature to adopt the primary language in HB1328 to protect midwifery access, uphold reproductive autonomy, and ensure safe, equitable maternity care for all families in Hawai‘i. Please **prioritize the well-being of Hawai‘i’s mothers and babies** by passing HB1328 to:

1. **Expanding midwifery access**
2. **Ensuring reproductive freedom and protect cultural birth practices**

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Pacific Birth Collective Board of Directors



Written Testimony Presented Before the Committee on Health & the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

February 5, 2025

By the Hawai'i Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (HAA)

Re: HB 1328 RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Chair Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice-Chair Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Chair Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, and Vice-Chair Rep. Cory M. Chun,

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1328

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1328. We provide testimony on behalf of our professional member organization and members of the Hawai'i Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (HAA), whose mission is “to promote the health and well-being of women and newborns within their families and communities through the development and support of the profession of midwifery as practiced by Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives (CMs).” As a part of our purpose, we also work to establish cooperation with other groups and organizations in promoting the health and well-being of Hawai'i families. We work to achieve legislation and regulation that is favorable to midwifery practice. We support and foster appropriate professional licensure regulations and legislation related to midwifery and women's health issues.

The HAA Board was invited to provide language for the CM in HB 1328 to reflect this equivalence based on ACNM Standards and the HAR-89-C chapter on NURSES. All language impacting the CM was thoroughly vetted by ACNM Government Affairs. We are confident in our endorsement of HB 1328 in its purposes to establish clear distinctions for non-nurse midwives as well as its regional considerations specific to Hawai'i regarding reproductive rights and access to healthcare. The HAA Board appreciates its inclusion in drafting a comprehensive midwifery bill to:

- Provide for continued regulation for non-nurse midwives including exemptions from this chapter for the APRN/CNM;
- Clarify definitions and scope based on national standards;
- Establish eligibility for prescriptive authority and insurance reimbursement including Medicaid for non-nurse midwives;
- Address reproductive, religious, and Native Hawaiian constitutional rights.

We also support clarifying the powers and duties of the director of DCCA, with an addition of annual reporting for the benefit of data collection, and for oversight the temporary re-establishment of the home birth task force as this statute will become permanent.

To aid in the establishment of ACNM Standards and APRN/CNM equivalence for the CM and distinction from the CPM, we have attached a number of important documents regarding CM definitions, scope, distinctions, the APRN/CNM HAR-89-C, and as CMs work in hospitals, clinics, birth centers, as well as in the home, ACNM's Position Statement on Planned Home Birth.

Furthermore, as there was a second midwifery bill introduced after establishment of HB 1328, the HAA Board also suggests amendments to HB 1328 to accommodate both bills' intentions:

HB 1328 SECTION 3. 457J-A Definitions amended to include:

“Telehealth” refers to any health care delivery enhanced by telecommunication. It is defined by the Telehealth Resource Center as “a collection of means or networks for enhancing the health care, public health, and health education delivery and support using telecommunications technologies.”

(Reference included: ACNM POSITION STATEMENT USE OF TELEHEALTH IN MIDWIFERY (2022))

And, inclusion of language from:

HB 1194 SECTION 1. 457J-D GLOBAL SIGNATURE AUTHORITY “Licensed midwives shall be authorized to sign, certify, or endorse all documents relating to health care provided for their clients within their scope of practice, including workers' compensation verification documents, temporary disability insurance forms, verification and evaluation forms of the department of human services and department of education, verification and authorization forms of the department of health, and physical examination forms; provided that nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the scope of practice of licensed midwives.”

SECTION 3. Section 329-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended as follows:

1. By adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted and to read: ""Licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife" means a person licensed under chapter 457J who is registered under this chapter to administer or prescribe a controlled substance; provided that a licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife shall not be authorized to request, receive, or sign for professional controlled substance samples."

2. By amending the definition of "designated member of the health care team" to read: ""Designated member of the health care team" includes physician assistants, advanced practice registered nurses, licensed midwives practicing as certified midwives, and covering physicians who are authorized under state law to prescribe drugs."

3. By amending the definition of "practitioner" to include:

and

(3) A licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife licensed and registered under section 329-32 to

prescribe and administer controlled substances in the course of professional practice in this State; and (4) A pharmacy, hospital, or other institution licensed, registered, or otherwise permitted to distribute, dispense, conduct research with respect to or to administer a controlled substance in the course of professional practice or research in this State."

SECTION 4. Section 453-51, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending the definition of "health professional" to read as follows: "'Health professional" means any of the following: and (3) A licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife with prescriptive authority under chapter 457J and duly licensed in the State; or (4) For the purpose of dispensing antibiotic therapy under this section, a pharmacist who is licensed or otherwise authorized to engage in the practice of pharmacy under chapter 461."

We appreciate your careful consideration of our testimony,

Sincerely,

The Hawai'i Affiliate of ACNM Board

Annette Manant, PhD, ARPN, CNM President

Connie Conover, CNM, MSN Vice President & Treasurer

Margaret Ragen, CM, LM, MS Secretary & Affiliate Legislative Contact

acnmhawaiiaffiliate@gmail.com

<https://hawaiimidwives.org/>

Attached:

- 1) ACNM: DEFINITION OF MIDWIFERY AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIVES AND CERTIFIED MIDWIVES (2021)
- 2) ACNM: CNM-CM-CPM COMPARISON CHART (2022)
- 3) Hawai'i Administrative Rules NURSES (HAR-89-C)
- 4) ACNM: POSITION STATEMENT ON PLANNED HOME BIRTH (2016)
- 5) ACNM POSITION STATEMENT USE OF TELEHEALTH IN MIDWIFERY (2022)

**DEFINITION OF MIDWIFERY
AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE
OF CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIVES AND CERTIFIED MIDWIVES**

Midwifery as practiced by certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) encompasses the independent provision of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; sexual and reproductive health; gynecologic health; and family planning services, including preconception care. Midwives also provide primary care for individuals from adolescence throughout the lifespan as well as care for the healthy newborn during the first 28 days of life. Midwives provide care for all individuals who seek midwifery care, inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations. Midwives provide initial and ongoing comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. They conduct physical examinations; independently prescribe medications including but not limited to controlled substances, treatment of substance use disorder, and expedited partner therapy; admit, manage, and discharge patients; order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic tests; and order medical devices, durable medical equipment, and home health services. Midwifery care includes health promotion, disease prevention, risk assessment and management, and individualized wellness education and counseling. These services are provided in partnership with individuals and families in diverse settings such as ambulatory care clinics, private offices, telehealth and other methods of remote care delivery, community and public health systems, homes, hospitals, and birth centers.

CNMs and CMs are educated in graduate-level midwifery programs accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). CNMs and CMs pass a national certification exam administered by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) to receive the professional designation of CNM (if they have an active registered nurse [RN] credential at the time of the certification exam) or CM.

CNMs and CMs must demonstrate that they meet the Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice¹ of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) upon completion of their midwifery education programs and must practice in accordance with ACNM Standards for the Practice of Midwifery.² ACNM competencies and standards are consistent with or exceed the global competencies and standards for the practice of midwifery as defined by the International Confederation of Midwives.³ To maintain the designation of CNM or CM, midwives must be recertified every 5 years through AMCB and must meet specific continuing education requirements.

REFERENCES:

1. American College of Nurse-Midwives. ACNM core competencies for basic midwifery practice. Published March 20, 2020. Accessed April 13, 2021.
https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/acnmldata/uploadfilename/00000000050/ACNMCoreCompetenciesMar2020_final.pdf
2. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Standards for the practice of midwifery. Published 2011. Accessed April 13, 2021.
http://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/acnmldata/uploadfilename/00000000051/standards_for_practice_of_midwifery_sept_2011.pdf
3. International Confederation of Midwives. Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice: 2019 Update. Published October 2019. Accessed April 13, 2021.
https://www.internationalmidwives.org/assets/files/general-files/2019/10/icm-competencies-en-print-october-2019_final_18-oct-5db05248843e8.pdf

Source: Scope of Practice Taskforce

Approved: ACNM Board of Directors, Dec. 2011. Updated: Feb. 2012, Dec. 2021

Comparison of Certified Nurse Midwives, Certified Midwives, and Certified Professional Midwives

Clarifying the distinctions among professional midwifery credentials in the United States

International Confederation of Midwives' Definition of MIDWIFE	<p>While the profession of midwifery has developed differently in each country, we share a common understanding of the midwife internationally. The International Confederation of Midwives' definition is:</p> <p>The midwife is recognized as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labor, and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife's own responsibility and to provide care for the newborn and the infant. This care includes preventative measures, the promotion of normal birth, the detection of complications in mother and child, the accessing of medical care or other appropriate assistance and the carrying out of emergency measures. The midwife has an important task in health counseling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and the community. This work should involve antenatal education and preparation for parenthood and may extend to women's health, sexual or reproductive health and childcare. A midwife may practice in any setting including the home, community, hospitals, clinics, or health units.</p>
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NATIONAL MIDWIFERY CREDENTIALS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIFE (CNM)	CERTIFIED MIDWIFE (CM)	CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFE (CPM)
EDUCATION			
Minimum Degree Required for Certification	Graduate Degree		Certification does not require an academic degree but is based on demonstrated competency in specified areas of knowledge and skills.
Minimum Education Requirements for Admission to Midwifery Education Program	Bachelor's Degree or higher from an accredited college or university AND		High School Diploma or equivalent
	Earn RN license prior to or within midwifery education program.	Successful completion of required science & health courses and related health skills training prior to or within midwifery education program.	Prerequisites for accredited programs vary, but typically include specific courses such as statistics, microbiology, anatomy and physiology, and experience such as childbirth education or doula certification. There are no specified requirements for entry to the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) pathway: an apprenticeship process that includes verification of knowledge and skills by qualified preceptors.
Clinical Experience Requirements	Attainment of knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors as identified by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Education.		Attainment of knowledge and skills, identified in the periodic job analysis conducted by NARM.

NATIONAL MIDWIFERY CREDENTIALS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIFE (CNM)	CERTIFIED MIDWIFE (CM)	CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFE (CPM)
	<p>Clinical education must occur under the supervision of an American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB)-certified CNM/CM or other qualified preceptor who holds a graduate degree, has preparation for clinical teaching, and has clinical expertise and didactic knowledge commensurate with the content taught; >50% of clinical education must be under CNM/CM supervision.</p>		<p>NARM requires that the clinical component of the educational process must be at least two years in duration and include a minimum of 55 births in three distinct categories. Clinical education must occur under the supervision of a midwife who must be nationally certified, legally recognized and who has practiced for at least three years and attended 50 out-of-hospital births post certification.</p> <p>CPMs certified via the PEP may earn a Midwifery Bridge Certificate (MBC) to demonstrate they meet the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) standards for minimum education.</p>
EDUCATION PROGRAM ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION			
	<p>The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) is authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit midwifery education programs and institutions. Midwifery education programs must be located within or affiliated with a regionally accredited institution.</p>		<p>The Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) is authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit midwifery education programs and institutions. The scope of recognition includes certificate and degree-granting institutions, programs within accredited institutions, and distance education programs.</p>
SCOPE OF PRACTICE			
Range of care provided	<p>Midwifery as practiced by CNMs and CMs encompasses the independent provision of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; sexual and reproductive health; gynecologic health; and family planning services, including preconception care. Midwives also provide primary care for individuals from adolescence throughout the lifespan as well as care for the healthy newborn during the first 28 days of life. Midwives provide care for all individuals who seek midwifery care, inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations.</p> <p>CNMs/CMs provide initial and ongoing comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. They conduct physical examinations; independently prescribe medications including but not limited to controlled substances, treatment of substance use disorder, and expedited partner therapy; admit, manage, and discharge patients; order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic tests; and order medical devices, durable medical equipment, and home health services.</p> <p>Midwifery care as practiced by CNMs and CMs includes health promotion, disease prevention, risk assessment and management, and individualized wellness education and counseling. These services are provided in partnership with individuals and families in diverse settings such as ambulatory care clinics, private offices, telehealth and other methods of remote care delivery, community and public health systems, homes, hospitals, and birth centers.</p>		<p>Midwifery as practiced by CPMs offers care, education, counseling and support to women and their families throughout the caregiving partnership, including pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. CPMs provide on-going care throughout pregnancy and continuous, hands-on care during labor, birth and the immediate postpartum period, as well as maternal and well-baby care through the 6-8 week postpartum period.</p> <p>CPMs provide initial and ongoing comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. CPMs are trained to recognize abnormal or dangerous conditions requiring consultation with and/or referral to other healthcare professionals. They conduct physical examinations, administer medications, and use devices as allowed by state law, order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic tests.</p>
Practice Settings	All settings - hospitals, homes, birth centers, and offices. The majority of CNMs and CMs attend births in hospitals.		Homes, birth centers, and offices. The majority of CPMs attend births in homes and/or birth centers.

Prescriptive Authority	All US jurisdictions	Maine, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington, DC	CPMs do not maintain prescriptive authority; however, they may obtain and administer certain medications in select states.
Third Party Reimbursement	Most private insurance; Medicaid coverage mandated in all states; Medicare, TRICARE	Most private insurance; Medicaid coverage in Maine, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington, DC	Private insurance mandated in 6 states; coverage varies in other states; 13 states include CPMs in state Medicaid plans
CERTIFICATION			
NATIONAL MIDWIFERY CREDENTIALS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIFE (CNM)	CERTIFIED MIDWIFE (CM)	CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFE (CPM)
Certifying Organization	American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB)		North American Registry of Midwives (NARM)
	AMCB and NARM are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies		
Requirements Prior to Taking National Certification Exam	Graduation from a midwifery education program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME); AND Verification by program director of completion of education program AND Verification of master's degree or higher <i>*CNMs must also submit evidence of an active RN license at time of initial certification</i>		Graduation from a midwifery education program accredited by the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) OR Completion of NARM's Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) OR AMCB-Certified CNM/CM with at least ten community-based birth experiences OR Completion of an equivalent state licensure program All applicants must also submit evidence of current adult CPR and neonatal resuscitation certification or course completion
Recertification Requirement	Every 5 years		Every 3 years
LICENSURE			
Legal Status	Licensed in 50 states plus the District of Columbia and U.S. territories as midwives, nurse-midwives, advanced practice registered nurses, or nurse practitioners.	Licensed in Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.	Licensed in 35 states and the District of Columbia.
Licensure Agency	Boards of Midwifery, Medicine, Nursing or Departments of Health	Boards of Midwifery, Medicine, Nursing, Complementary Health Care Providers or Departments of Health	Boards of Midwifery, Medicine, Nursing, Complementary Health Care Providers; Departments of Health or Departments of Professional Licensure or Regulation
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION			
	American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)		National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM)
<i>Note: This document does not address individuals who are not certified and may attend births with or without legal recognition.</i>			

SUBCHAPTER 14
ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE

§16-89-81 Practice specialties. (a) The four areas of advanced practice registered nurses recognized by the board from which the practice specialties are derived are:

- (1) Nurse practitioner ("NP");
- (2) Certified registered nurse anesthetist ("CRNA");
- (3) Certified nurse-midwife ("CNM"); and
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(4) Clinical nurse specialist ("CNS").

(b) In addition to those functions specified for the registered nurse, and in accordance with appropriate nationally recognized standards of practice, the advanced practice registered nurse may perform the following generic acts which include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Provide direct care by utilizing advanced scientific knowledge, skills, nursing and related theories to assess, plan, and implement appropriate health and nursing care to patients;
- (2) Provide indirect care. Plan, guide, evaluate and direct the nursing care given by other personnel associated with the health care team;
- (3) Teach, counsel, or plan care for individuals or group, utilizing a synthesis of advanced skills, theories, and knowledge of biologic, pharmacologic, physical, sociocultural and psychological aspects of care to accomplish desired objectives;

- (4) Serve as a consultant and resource of advanced clinical knowledge and skills to those involved directly or indirectly in patient care;
- (5) Participate in joint and periodic evaluation of services rendered including, but not limited to, chart reviews, case reviews, patient evaluations, and outcome of case statistics;
- (6) Establish collaborative, consultative, and referral networks as appropriate with other health care professionals. Patients who require care beyond the scope of practice of an APRN shall be referred to an appropriate health care provider;
- (7) Manage the plan of care prescribed for the patient;
- (8) Initiate and maintain accurate records and authorize appropriate regulatory and other legal documents;
- (9) Recognize, develop, and implement professional and community educational programs related to health care;
- (10) Conduct research and analyze the health needs of individuals and populations and design programs which target at-risk groups and cultural and environmental factors which foster health and prevent illness;
- (11) Participate in policy analysis and development of new policy initiative in the area of practice specialty; and

- (12) Contribute to the development, maintenance, and change of health care delivery systems to improve quality of health care services and consumer access to services.

(c) The scope of practice for each of the four areas of clinical practice specialties shall be in accordance with nationally recognized standards of practice which are consistent with the following:(3) Certified nurse-midwife scope of practice:

(A)

(B)

Provide independent management of women's health care, focusing particularly on pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period, care of the newborn, and the family planning and gynecological needs of women;

Practice in accordance with the standards for the practice of nurse-midwifery of the American College of Nurse- Midwives, unless otherwise indicated by the board. The standards include but do not limit the nurse midwife to:

- (i) Provide primary care services for women and newborns;
- (ii) Take histories and perform physical exams;
- (iii) Order and interpret diagnostic tests;
- (iv) Operate within a health care system that provides for consultation, collaborative management, or referral as indicated by the status of the client; and
- (v) Admit clients for inpatient care at facilities licensed as hospitals or birth centers in the State; and

Includes all of the functions listed in paragraph (1) relating to nurse practitioner scope of practice.

SUBCHAPTER 16

ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY

§16-89-116 Purpose. The purpose of this subchapter is to establish the requirements of the board for APRN prescriptive authority. APRNs who are granted prescriptive authority shall only prescribe drugs appropriate to their practice specialties as recognized by the board and in accordance with the exclusionary formulary. [Eff 12/27/10; comp 3/28/13; comp 10/27/18] (Auth: HRS §§26-9 (k), 436B-4, 436B-7) (Imp: HRS §457-8.6)

§16-89-117 Prescriptive authority. Only an APRN granted prescriptive authority by the board shall be able to practice as an APRN with prescriptive authority or use any sign, card, or device to indicate or in any way imply, that the person is an APRN who is authorized to prescribe. [Eff 12/27/10 comp 3/28/13; comp 10/27/18] (Auth: HRS §§26-9(k), 436B-4, 436B-7) (Imp: HRS §457-8.6)

§16-89-119 Prescriptive authority eligibility requirements. (a) The requirements for prescriptive authority are as follows:

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16-89-119

- (1) A completed application for prescriptive authority provided by the board and submitted with all appropriate documents and required fees;
- (2) Proof of a current, unencumbered license as a registered nurse in this State and in all other states in which the nurse has a current and active license;

- (3) Proof of a current, unencumbered license as an advanced practice registered nurse in this State and in all other states in which the nurse has a current and active license as an advanced practice registered nurse or similar designation;
- (4) Proof of a current, unencumbered certification for specialized and advanced nursing practice from a national certifying body recognized by the board;
- (5) Proof of successful completion of an accredited graduate-level nursing program with a significant educational and practical concentration on the direct care of patients, recognized by the board, leading to a graduate-level degree as a certified registered nurse anesthetist, a nurse midwife, a clinical nurse specialist, or a nurse practitioner. A graduate-level degree in nursing education or nursing administration does not qualify an applicant for prescriptive authority.
- (6) Proof of successful completion of at least thirty contact hours, as part of a graduate-level nursing degree program from an accredited, board-recognized college or university, of advanced pharmacology education, including advanced pharmacotherapeutics that is integrated into the curriculum, within the three-year time period immediately preceding the date of application. If completed more than the three-year time period, then one of the following shall be completed within the three-year time period immediately preceding the date of application for initial prescriptive authority:
 - (A) At least thirty contact hours of advanced pharmacology, including advanced pharmacotherapeutics, from an accredited, board-recognized college or university; or

- (B) At least thirty contact hours of continuing education ("CE") approved by board-recognized national certifying bodies in advanced pharmacology, including advanced pharmacotherapeutics related to the applicant's scope of nursing practice specialty; and
- (7) Payment of a non-refundable application fee.
89-47

§16-89-119

Upon satisfying all requirements in chapter 457, HRS, and this chapter, and payment of required fees, the board shall grant prescriptive authority to the APRN.

(b) Nothing in this section shall preclude a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or an APRN from carrying out the prescribed medical orders of a licensed dentist, physician, osteopath, or podiatrist licensed in accordance with chapter 448, 453, or 463E, HRS, or the orders of a licensed APRN granted prescriptive authority in accordance with this chapter.

(c) Nothing in this chapter shall require a certified registered nurse anesthetist to have prescriptive authority under this chapter in order to provide anesthesia care. [Eff 12/27/10; am and comp 3/28/13; am and comp 10/27/18] (Auth: HRS §§26-9(k), 436B-4, 436B-7) (Imp: HRS §457-8.6)



POSITION STATEMENT

Planned Home Birth

The number of families in the United States choosing to stay home to give birth has increased significantly in the past decade.^{1,2} For the essentially well woman experiencing a healthy pregnancy, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn course, childbirth with qualified providers can be accomplished safely in all birth settings, including home, birth center, and hospital.³⁻¹² The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) affirms that:

- Every family has a right to give birth in an environment where human dignity, self-determination, and the family's cultural context are respected.
- Every woman has a right to shared decision-making regarding place of birth, and planned home birth should be accessible to healthy women who desire to give birth at home.
- Women who plan home births experience a course of care that facilitates normal, physiologic birth and reduces the need for obstetric and neonatal interventions.^{6-8,11,12}
- Certified midwives and certified nurse-midwives are qualified to provide antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn care in the home.
- Home birth is best accomplished in an integrated, supportive system of safe, seamless care with respectful collaboration among all health care providers and institutions if a transfer of care from home to hospital becomes necessary.¹³⁻²⁰
- States and jurisdictions are responsible for creating a climate of respect for women's autonomy and authority through laws and regulations that support childbirth in home, birth center, and hospital settings.
- Reimbursement from third party payers should be available to licensed maternity care providers for comprehensive home birth services.
- Professional liability insurance carriers should provide coverage at actuarially appropriate premiums for licensed maternity care providers who attend home births.

Background

While more than 98% of women in the United States give birth in hospitals, some families prefer to give birth at home.^{1,21} The safety of birth in any setting is a primary concern and has

been the focus of home birth research.³⁻¹² Planned home birth refers to care by qualified providers of well women experiencing a healthy maternity cycle within a system that provides for hospitalization if necessary. Large observational studies have demonstrated excellent perinatal outcomes for planned home births.³⁻¹² Planned home birth is also credited with reduced use of medical interventions that are associated with perinatal morbidity for both women and their infants. The safety of home birth is optimized by assessing appropriateness of the woman and family for planned home birth, attendance by a qualified maternity care provider, and integrated systems that support collaborative care.¹³⁻²⁰

In the context of midwifery care, women are encouraged and supported to make informed choices regarding where they wish to give birth.²²⁻²⁵ The process of informed choice for the selection of birth site includes consideration of:

- Evidence-based delineation of potential risks and benefits of each available birth site,
- Assessment of maternal and fetal health,
- Access to qualified home birth attendants,
- Mechanism for transport of mother or newborn if need is indicated for personnel or equipment available only in the hospital setting

The home birth setting provides an unparalleled opportunity to study and learn from physiologic birth.^{26, 27} Insights into best practices for pregnancy and childbirth in all settings may be derived from further research of birth within the home.

For further guidance regarding evidence-based maternity care in the home setting, ACNM maintains several resources including the *Midwifery Provision of Home Birth Services ACNM Clinical Bulletin*¹³ and the Home Birth Practice Manual 3rd Edition.²⁸

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* Midwifery as used throughout this document refers to the education and practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) who have been certified by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) or the American Midwifery Certification Board, Inc. (AMCB).

Source: Division of Standards and Practice: Clinical Practice and Documents Section and Homebirth Section
Approved by the ACNM Board of Directors: December 2005,
Revised: May 2011, Updated: December 2016

POSITION STATEMENT

The Use of Telehealth in Midwifery

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) affirms the following:

- Blending traditional care and telehealth care is a viable option for providing primary, sexual, reproductive, perinatal, and newborn care services.
- The use of telehealth should be individualized based on patient preference, access to necessary technology, risks, and benefits.
- The principles of transparency, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality are paramount to the provision of telehealth.
- Fully informed consent and decision-making about the use of telehealth, including its benefits and the limitations, must be communicated to the individual receiving telehealth services.
- ACNM acknowledges that the “digital divide” may lead to inequity in telehealth services. Thus, ACNM supports ongoing work to develop solutions to ensure the equitable distribution of access to and use of digital resources.
- ACNM supports continued efforts to determine an evidence-based structure of prenatal care, including the utility and application of telehealth in its effects on sexual, reproductive, perinatal, and primary care health outcomes.

Background

Telehealth refers to any health care delivery enhanced by telecommunication. It is defined by the Telehealth Resource Center as “a collection of means or networks for enhancing the health care, public health, and health education delivery and support using telecommunications technologies.” The Telehealth Resource Center is a leading group of telehealth networks.¹ Telehealth encompasses a variety of technologies that can include mobile applications, remote monitoring, web-based education, and both individual and group provider visits. Provider visits via telehealth as a way of health care delivery have been particularly valuable for those living in remote areas and for those who may have transportation difficulties, physical or financial limitations, and other factors. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the benefits of telehealth for both providers and the people for whom they care, and it has illuminated potential health equity pitfalls stemming from access to and the use of telehealth.

The use of telehealth in reproductive health care did not start during the COVID-19 pandemic. A systematic review of 47 articles, which included more than 30,000 participants with a broad scope that included low- and high-risk pregnant people, family planning, and gynecology reflected the wide reach of telehealth services available prior to the pandemic. This review concluded that telehealth interventions were associated with improvements in obstetric outcomes, perinatal smoking cessation, breastfeeding, adherence to contraception use, and early access to medical abortion services.² In rural areas, telehealth visits have been used in caring for both low- and high-risk pregnant people. Higher-risk people may benefit from remote

monitoring from maternal-fetal medicine specialists in large medical centers, whereas lower-risk people may benefit from nutritional and other counseling done through telehealth; this can decrease barriers to care for working people, parents, and those with transportation challenges.³ One large academic medical center implemented a maternal-fetal telehealth program to eliminate barriers to access; it provided financial and experiential benefits to the recipients, with an average of \$90.28 saved per consult.⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the need for telehealth services because of social distancing, school and daycare closures, and staffing shortages in health care settings. People seeking care were also fearful of coming into health care facilities.⁵ Providers mentioned an “intimacy” provided by video visits because of seeing patients in their own homes, with an opportunity to meet partners, children, and pets.⁵ A recent review of telehealth in obstetric care confirmed these positive outcomes. Barriers were mostly technical in nature, regarding virtual platform setup, internet strength, and user education.⁶ A study of patient and provider satisfaction with telehealth in prenatal care demonstrated that it was a positive experience for both patients and providers. This was a result of the increased time spent in the visit, the absence of travel and wait times to be seen, and not needing to worry about childcare. These visits also allowed partner and family involvement. Providers felt that telehealth was a good option “for the right patient.”⁷ It must be noted that this same satisfaction was not noted in urban settings with non-English-speaking patients, populations in which telehealth was viewed with distrust.⁸

A systematic review of studies looking at the outcomes associated with telehealth demonstrated improvement in smoking cessation, early access to medical abortion services, improvement in breastfeeding success, and better access to care for those people who need high-risk-obstetrics providers.⁹ However, more studies need to be performed to obtain additional evidence as this modality of care is incorporated into routine practice.

Practice Issues

The first telehealth requirement is a secure, high-powered internet connection.¹⁰ Also, both the patient and provider need privacy and safe space for the visit. To be classified as a telehealth visit according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) rules, the visit must include a 2-way audio and video communication, using a virtual platform that is compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).⁹ However, even if the provider’s internet connection is strong, the patient’s may not be.¹¹ The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) published recommendations for telehealth use in February 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to address issues of licensure, privacy, and liability.¹² Some states have laws that require the visit to be recorded; however, even if this is not the case, the visit must be documented in the electronic medical record.⁹ Insurance reimbursement for telehealth services is also an issue. Smaller, rural hospitals and health systems that are not affiliated with major universities or that lack electronic clinical documentation were less likely to adopt telehealth policies that would allow reimbursement.¹³ Telehealth has the potential to improve existing health inequities through increasing access and removing barriers to traditional health care. However, it is imperative that the contributions telehealth may make to worsening health inequity be acknowledged and addressed. There is a risk that telehealth may add another

layer of inequity to the health care system, because historically marginalized populations are more likely to experience disparities in access to or the use of digital technology, known as the “digital divide.”¹³ In addition, persons with disabilities have experienced challenges with the transition to telehealth.¹⁴

The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the issue of licensure requirements to practice across state lines. There is an existing system that 17 states and the District of Columbia have enacted to deal with emergency needs for health care providers; those states enacted the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act. Many states are now amending their licensure requirements in various ways, such as expedited approvals for licensure.¹⁵ Liability exposure is another issue that needs to be addressed. Two main issues to think about are whether the provider’s malpractice insurance covers telehealth visits and care provided outside the state in which the provider practices. Policy documents should declare telehealth-related claim coverage.^{16, 17}

Although telehealth was used before the COVID-19 pandemic, this situation significantly increased its use and highlighted its benefits and challenges. As midwifery practice continues to incorporate telehealth, there needs to be more research on patient outcomes. Midwives must also be aware that this modality of care may not be appropriate or acceptable for all people for whom we care.

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Note. Midwifery and midwives as used throughout this document refer to the education and practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) who have been certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB).

Original Source: Clinical Standards and Documents Committee
Approved by the ACNM Board of Directors: 2022

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:55:44 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Koa	Hawaii Home Birth Collective, Malama Na Pua O Haumea, Pacific Birth Collective	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha mai,

My name is Alana Koa, I am in support of HB 1328.

I come from the Island of Maui.

I am a mother, a member of the Hawaii Home Birth Collective as well as a member of Malama Na Pua O Haumea, I am an inspired Midwife and pale keiki.

The reason we ask and need your support on OUR Bill HB1328 and not the other bills being proposed today because OUR Bill... covers, respects...and protects everyone collectively.

Licensed Midwives, Traditional Midwives, CPMs, CNM's, Cultural Practitioners, religions... and me, this bill protects me as a kanaka.

I oppose for HB1194, for many reasons, one them being that HB1194 will make all customary practices regulated by the state! Overriding our rights in the constitution to practice! Such practices include La'aulapa'au, Lomilomi, Ho'oponopono, and Hanau!!

As a Kanaka OUR Bill HB1328 protects our cultural rights, it protects the practice of hānau, a practice that is as old as time, just like many practices in Hawaii. Hanāu is the practice of everyone's existence, in this room, in this world...

OUR Bill lets us, let's me be able to learn from my kupuna, my aunties, my uncles...etc. As right now it criminalizes any Tūtūwahine or (grandmother) to offer care or share knowledge to her mo'opuna (grandchild) about pregnancy or to be there for their births, it can criminalize her and even fine her...

Our Bill helps protect women's human right's and Maternal Health, so women have the right to choose where, how, and with whom she wants at her birth.

Birth is a ceremony,

Birth is Women, it is in our blood and in our nature.

To the women and families fear birth... but what if we could change that for them, heal them from their traumas. To give our people the choice of how they want to hānau (birth)! To give Women and Families the actual care that they deserve during hānau (birth).

This Bill also expands access to licensure. As of right now there is only one option which is the MEAC accredited pathway, which is to move off island at an accredited school, and to learn and serve in a community that is foreign to me.

As more realistic option for some just like myself would be the PEP pathway, the apprenticeship model. Which is more affordable, keeps me home, and I am able to learn from Kupuna.

This Bill would bring back the PEP pathway and both pathways take the same NARM exam at end.

HB 1328 is the PERFECT Bill that will help correct all the wrongs that have been occurring throughout the years, this bill WILL protect its people and is FOR THE PEOPLE!

I hope your final decision will also be for the people!

Mahalo for your time aloha,

Alana Koa



Testimony of
Selena M. Kamara, CPM, LM
Hale Kealaula, LLC
O'ahu, HI

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,
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Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in **Strong Support of HB 1328**, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a Certified Professional Midwife (since 2006) Hawai'i Licensed Midwife and a Certified NARM Preceptor. I have had the honor of training many students who were in PEP and MEAC accredited schools, who went on to become CPM's and traditional midwives. I am also a mentor in the NBMA (National Black Midwives Association), a member of the NACPM (National Association of certified professional midwives) and an elder member and one of the founders of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- **It reflects the voices of the community.** Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- **There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwife makes anyone safer.** It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- **The lack of access to care is concerning and a major safety hazard.** Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.



- **Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with.** If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents would be more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- **Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected.** We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- **Cultural birth practices are a human right.** This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal and infant mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- **It protects families.** The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- **It protects reproductive choice.** The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- **Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed.** Currently, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i, and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and not fair.
- **Supports Medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives,** which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- **Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs,** which will allow us access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families we serve.

For all these reasons and more, I request that you please PASS HB1328.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1328

Selena M Kamara, CPM, LM
Owner/Hale Kealaula, LLC



**HALE
KEALAULA**

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:39:59 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadine Ortega	Tagnawa for Maui	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Loy and Honorable Members,

Please pass H.B. 1328.

Tagnawa was the first organization to provide Ilokano and Tagalog translations and resource navigation to survivors in the immediate aftermath of the 2023 Lahaina fire, and went on to conduct the largest needs assessment post-disaster of the Lahaina Filipino community to date. We are currently undertaking the first data gathering effort to understand the impacts of the Lahaina fire on women, and we believe this bill will ensure women in future environmental disasters will have uninterrupted access to pre-natal and post-partum support. Birthworkers provided an invaluable lifeline of support for female fire survivors in the days and months after the fire. We need to decriminalize, expand, and fortify midwifery infrastructure to weather environmental disasters to come.

While not immediately obvious, this bill is essential to mitigate climate change risks to gender equality and women across Hawai'i.

Further, our organization is committed to the preservation of Native Hawaiian and Filipino cultures of care, and the acceleration of gender equality in Hawai'i. HB1328 is the only measure that will advance these goals and the needs of expectant working class mothers of color across Hawai'i.

Accordingly, we ask that the Committee pass this HB1328.

Mahalo,

Nadine Ortega, J.D.

Executive Director, Tagnawa

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:27:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

On behalf of Zen Den Midwifery and clients, we OPPOSE HB 1328 and ask both committees to vote NO to HB 1328. This is the wrong vehicle to continue the licensing program. **Autonomous providers responsible for birthing people and their babies should be required to have both knowledge and competencies evaluated via accredited education. *In any other medical profession this would not be in question.* Please support the safety and informed choice of Hawaii's families by voting no.**

Sincerely, ZDM Community



2/08/2025

OPPOSITION TO HB1328, RELATING TO MIDWIVES

To: House Committees on Consumer Protection & Commerce, and Health
Representative Donovan Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Gilbert Cory Chun, Vice Chair
Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue Keohokapu-Lee Loy, 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, MA-MCHS, LM, CPM, Maui Representative
Taylor Hamil, MSM, LM, LMT, CPM, Hawai'i Island Representative

Time: Thirty-Third Legislature Regular Session of 2025
Mondayday, February 10, 2025 at 2:00PM

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Chun, and Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy and committee members:

Testimony in Opposition of HB1328

Midwives Alliance of Hawaii opposes HB1328, and respectfully asks you to vote no. A licensure program exists to protect the consumer and HB1328 does not protect the birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

HB1328 does not require accredited education, does not provide title protection and does not support the advancement of the profession of midwifery. Licensure based on completion of an accredited midwifery program meets the ICM global standards for midwifery education. Since the first accreditation of a midwifery program in 2002, the

vast majority (13 out of 20) of states who newly implemented midwife licensure laws require MEAC education for CPMs. This is in line with the growth of midwifery as a profession and upholds the safety of our communities.

Title protection is an important element to consumer protection and informed choice. Implementing a licensure program that has outdated language and scope of practice does not meet the current standards of midwifery and limits access to midwifery care, limits the overall scope of the profession and compromises the safety of birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:02:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haylin chock	Pihana ka ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a member of pihana ka ikena of kaula'i, our group values and perpetuates traditional healing practices that should be accessible to our communities and protected. I strongly support HB1328 to protect our birth workers and the care they are able to offer to our communities. I urge my our legislators to support this bill. By protecting birth workers, midwife's and traditional healers ability to provide care we are protecting cultural practices and allowing expecting mothers to choose plans that are best for themselves and their keiki.



The Libertarian Party of Hawaii is urging lawmakers to refrain from continuing the regulations for midwives and birthing practitioners in Hawaii. By maintaining licensing requirements instead of letting them hit the sunset provision (expiration), these measures prolong the regulatory framework that limits individuals' autonomy and stifles the natural flow of market dynamics in the midwifery field.

Read closely: These measures are cleverly worded to make the reader think they're doing us a favor by adding more provisions for midwifery and homebirth licensure. The reality is that if this bill and others like it are turned down, the regulatory framework will expire per “sunset laws”.

Let's be clear: The Libertarian Party of Hawaii supports all freedom in birthing options including pale keiki, lola, and samba - as well as any birth-related service providers of their choosing. These choices are sacred and inherent in women's rights. Parents and families must have the freedom to choose how they journey through their birthing experience without concern for burdensome regulations or mandates of any kind. We do not need a “home birth task force”; we need to recognize the right of a mother to make her own healthcare choices.

The legislature's own quoted research condemns them at the beginning of [HB1328](#):

“The legislature recognizes that, for many people, decisions about pregnancy and birth are informed by their personal or community history and culture and are experiences of great social, cultural, and spiritual significance. For many people, pregnancy and birth are not primarily medical events.”

From research highlighted by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in the White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis (June 2022):



“... legal access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being.”

Extending the licensure program welcomes more government interference in private healthcare practices and decisions. These bills would block Hawaii's ability to transition to a deregulated environment that prioritizes individual freedom of choice and a competitive market driven by consumer demand rather than bureaucratic mandates.

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii opposes these measures and urges representatives to take a freedom-centered approach that prioritizes the woman's right to liberally choose all aspects of how she cares for her and her family.

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:58:48 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Camille Shelton	More Than Maternity LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Midwifery, and other terms referring to its likeness, is traditional care that has produced beautiful, positive, and healthy outcomes for birthing families around the world for generations. I support what is proposed as it supports the freedom, choice and preservation of midwifery and families right to midwifery.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I

HOUSE JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025 AT 2:00PM
POSITION: SUPPORT

HB 1328 RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committee,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 1328, which continues a licensing scheme for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives, to be overseen by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Reestablishes the home birth task force to provide recommendations on issues related to home births. Dissolves the task force on 6/30/2026. Requires reports to the Legislature.

On behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, we strongly support HB 1328, which upholds the rights of birthing people to choose where and with whom they give birth, while ensuring equitable access to midwifery care and reproductive autonomy. This bill aligns with the core principles of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i's platform, particularly those regarding Health and Wellbeing, Human and Civil Rights, and Native Hawaiians and Hawaiian Culture.

Health and Wellbeing

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i firmly believes that all people have an inherent right to live a healthy life in a clean and safe environment, including access to high-quality healthcare. We support the creation of a healthcare system that values people over profit, and follows best practices and current research to deliver holistic care covering both physical and mental healthcare. HB 1328 directly supports this value by expanding access to midwifery care, particularly for rural and underserved communities. The bill ensures that all birthing people have access to trauma informed, culturally responsive and community-based midwifery care, which has been proven to improve maternal and infant health outcomes. Furthermore, by removing unnecessary restrictions on licensure pathways, HB 1328 enhances accessibility to skilled care providers and addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare crisis.

Human and Civil Rights

This bill also aligns with our commitment to reproductive freedom and choice. The current licensing structure under HRS 457J has created barriers that disproportionately affect those seeking non-hospital birth options, infringing on a birthing person's right to make informed decisions about their own care. HB 1328 removes these barriers and protects individuals from being criminalized for seeking or providing midwifery care. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i has long advocated for the protection of reproductive rights, including access to safe and legal abortion services and the right to choose one's birth plan without government overreach.

Native Hawaiians and Hawaiian Culture

HB 1328 acknowledges the importance of Native Hawaiian traditional birthing practices and provides a clear exemption for practitioners of these cultural traditions. The existing law has failed to recognize the legitimacy of these practices, effectively impeding the ability of Native Hawaiian birth practitioners to serve their communities. By affirming the constitutional protections of Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, HB 1328 ensures that traditional midwifery knowledge is preserved and respected rather than criminalized.

In Summary

HB 1328 upholds the Democratic Party of Hawai'i's commitment to equitable healthcare, reproductive justice, and cultural preservation. It ensures that all birthing people have access to safe, legal, and culturally competent care while removing unnecessary restrictions that have disproportionately impacted rural, Indigenous, and low-income communities. We strongly urge the committee to pass this measure to protect and expand maternal healthcare options in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Bronson Silva

Chair, Legislative Committee
bronsonksilva@gmail.com

Laura Acasio

Vice-Chair, Legislative Committee
laura.acasio@gmail.com

Sarah Simmons

Vice-Chair, Legislative Committee
simmons.saraha@gmail.com

Osa Tui

Vice-Chair, Legislative Committee
osatui.rr@gmail.com

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:06:53 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauleva Lua'iufi Aiono	M.A.N.A. Pasefika	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Pacific traditional midwifery must be preserved at all costs. Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders suffer disproportionate rates of negative perinatal outcomes, as well as the chronic mental and physical sicknesses that can be prevented through positive perinatal experiences. We intimately know that relying purely on western medicine not only doesn't address our holistic health as indigenous people, but that often these systems and institutions cause our communities direct harm. We support the protection & enshrinement of families' rights to have cultural and appropriate perinatal care and assert that no governmental body should be restricting individuals from receiving care from chosen providers **ESPECIALLY** during the important and delicate perinatal period.



The Libertarian Party of Hawaii is urging lawmakers to refrain from continuing the regulations for midwives and birthing practitioners in Hawaii. By maintaining licensing requirements instead of letting them hit the sunset provision (expiration), these measures prolong the regulatory framework that limits individuals' autonomy and stifles the natural flow of market dynamics in the midwifery field.

Read closely: These measures are cleverly worded to make the reader think they're doing us a favor by adding more provisions for midwifery and homebirth licensure. The reality is that if this bill and others like it are turned down, the regulatory framework will expire per “sunset laws”.

Let's be clear: The Libertarian Party of Hawaii supports all freedom in birthing options including pale keiki, lola, and samba - as well as any birth-related service providers of their choosing. These choices are sacred and inherent in women's rights. Parents and families must have the freedom to choose how they journey through their birthing experience without concern for burdensome regulations or mandates of any kind. We do not need a “home birth task force”; we need to recognize the right of a mother to make her own healthcare choices.

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Extending the licensure program welcomes more government interference in private healthcare practices and decisions. These bills would block Hawaii's ability to transition to a deregulated environment that prioritizes individual freedom of choice and a competitive market driven by consumer demand rather than bureaucratic mandates.

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii opposes these measures and urges representatives to take a freedom-centered approach that prioritizes the woman's right to liberally choose all aspects of how she cares for her and her family.

Austin Martin

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:16:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Chun	Pihana ka Ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB1328 as it will support cultural practices as we need to perpetuate and have freedom of choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:03:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taytum Herrick	Malama Na Pua o Haumea	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Taytum Herrick and I am an aspiring midwife and this bill effects me. This bill recognizes cultural practices and different pathways into licensure. This bill was carefully curated with community in mind, especially those who live rurally which I do here in Maui County. Please listen to the folks serving and living in these communities that just want choice and access to options.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:18:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Loel Kaikuaana	Pihana Ka Ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:31:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebekah Botello	Birth Believers	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all committee members -

I am writing today to **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB1328, Relating to Midwifery.

My name is Rebekah Botello. I am a homebirth mother of 4 and a 25 year veteran birth worker in Hawai'i. I have assisted hundreds of birthing families through t these years, and as a professional childbirth educator, I have provided free birth education to thousands!

People's lives have been **CHANGED FOR THE BETTER** because of my service and the service of others like myself.

For over a decade, I have been coming to speak to the Hawai'i State Legislature about maternal and infant care and the importance of **UNRESTRICTED ACCESS** to birth care for Hawai'i's birthing families.

Since HRS457J has been in place - so many of my community has been in a "birth stranglehold." That lefislation severely restricted their birth choices and other birth workers like myself had to stop serving our community for fear of being criminally penalized. This put our birthing moms and families at **GREAT RISK**.

Many of the birthing families connected to myself and my colleagues were forced to either birth in a western medical facility where they felt culturally and physically violated, or they had to choose to birth **ALONE** without qualified traditional birth attendant assistance.

HRSJ did **GREAT HARM** to Hawaii's birthing families and caused **MUCH RISK** to mothers and babies. The Hawai'i State Legislature is responsible for all this harm.

NOW - The Hawai'i State Legislature has an opportunity to **FIX** the problem!

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.

- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

In short - HB 1328 IS THE COMMUNITY'S CHOICE! It is important that laws represent the community, and what the community itself says that it needs. For countless years, the Legislature has received THOUSANDS of pages of testimony from the public in support FOR FREEDOM OF BIRTH CHOICES without government interference. This committee and The Hawai'i State Legislature must represent the public and not special interest groups.

Our community has been very clear on what is needed: solid licensure for clinical practices that local clinical midwives can access, with clear legality for all family (including hānai and extended), traditional practitioners (especially Kanaka, but also for other cultures), and other professionals and practitioners.

This community voice is broad, unified and educated, and deserves to be followed. HB 1328 comes from the community and is supported by the birthing community as a whole.

For all of these reasons and more, I strongly request that you please pass HB 1328.

Instead - on behalf of myself, my family, and my entire community - implore you PASS HB1328 which is a comprehensive bill that EXPANDS access to maternal and infant care of many kinds.

Sincerely -
Pastor Rebekah Botello
Wife, Mother, Sister, Aunt
Senior Childbirth Educator - Birth Believers
Professional Doula
Apprenticing Student Midwife

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:31:52 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Compehos	SHINE Sisterhood Initiative	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of

TARA COMPEHOS LM

Ka'u Hawai'i Island

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Greeting Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a Hawai'i State Licensed Midwife.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
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- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

*Thank you *

Tara Compehos, LM

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:32:25 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Luka	Pihana ka Ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1328, which continues the licensing framework for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives while reestablishing the home birth task force. This bill is essential in ensuring that families in Hawai'i retain the fundamental right to choose how and where they give birth.

For generations, midwifery has been an integral part of our communities, deeply rooted in cultural traditions and knowledge passed down through time. By requiring midwives to be licensed through a specific school chosen by government entities entities that may not fully understand or appreciate the cultural significance of these practices many skilled and experienced practitioners are being unfairly excluded. This limits access to safe and culturally appropriate birth options for families who wish to deliver at home.

A one-size-fits-all regulatory approach does not serve the best interests of Hawai'i's diverse communities. Families should have the autonomy to make informed decisions about their birth experiences, and midwives should have fair and inclusive pathways to licensure that respect and uphold their cultural and traditional expertise.

HB1328 takes an important step in recognizing the significance of home birth and midwifery while allowing for continued dialogue through the home birth task force. I urge you to support this bill to ensure that home birth remains a safe, accessible, and respected option for families across our islands.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:36:02 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alika Luka	Pihana ka Ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1328, which continues the licensing framework for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives while reestablishing the home birth task force. This bill is essential in ensuring that families in Hawai'i retain the fundamental right to choose how and where they give birth.

For generations, midwifery has been an integral part of our communities, deeply rooted in cultural traditions and knowledge passed down through time. By requiring midwives to be licensed through a specific school chosen by government entities—entities that may not fully understand or appreciate the cultural significance of these practices—many skilled and experienced practitioners are being unfairly excluded. This limits access to safe and culturally appropriate birth options for families who wish to deliver at home.

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HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:46:18 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahala	Maui Medic Healers Hui	Support	In Person

Comments:

Kīhei maui ola,

We are testifying today on behalf of Maui Medic Healers Hui, a community organization dedicated to the recovery of Lahaina and her survivors as well as healing justice for all Kanaka Maoli. Maui Medic Healers Hui affirms our support for HB 1328 for Increased Access and Protection of Traditional and Customary Birth Practices.

HB 1328 is a ho‘okauhua of the Lāhui Hawai‘i, a pregnant craving and hunger from our future children for the Ea of liberation. As a ho‘okauhua of our future keiki, the measure will center the piko of those who give birth by providing protection to pale keiki in the present. As a ho‘okauhua of our future keiki, this legislation will provide sanctuary for hānau practices our kupuna have given us today. We affirm that community and legislative support for this bill will empower the spiritual, cultural, and bodily autonomy of the Lāhui Hawai‘i by ensuring that future generations of Kanaka can be born into the world the way our ancestors were.

As medics and healers, we know that the criminalization of Hawaiian hānau practices is a symptom of the violence that the U.S. medical industrial complex exacts upon the lands, bodies, and cultures of Kanaka Maoli. Against the criminalization of hānau, we offer a decolonial diagnosis that centers the vitality of Ea for Hawaiian people. Ea is the breath of the ‘āina given to Kanaka Maoli by Papahānaumoku, our ancestral makuahine who gave birth to the Hawaiian archipelago millennia prior to the legal restrictions, license requirements, and certifications being enforced now by the U.S. medical industrial complex. Ea is the piko connecting Hawaiian bodies to the ‘āina that birthed us. Ea is the umbilical cord of hānau that conjoins our bodies to our ancestors and our ancestors to the ‘āina. To criminalize the practice of hānau is to sever this cord between kanaka, the ‘āina, and the akua—it is an act of ongoing colonial, medical violence against our people.

Ea nō ke Ea Hānau i kēia papa hānau, he piko nō ia, pili nō ka piko i ka makua, ke keiki, ke ola, ka make, me ka huli o ke Kanaka. Against this criminalization, HB 1328 provides a pu‘uhonua for Kanaka Maoli to collectively determine our rites of life, death, and transition. With love for the generations of keiki and pale keiki to come, we therefore call on the House representatives to affirm support of the bill in this legislative session.

‘I‘ini nō kākou i ka hā o Hāloa, he ho‘okauhua nō ia.

Come, let us satisfy together our hunger for pōhaku, the ‘ai kamaha‘o of our ‘āina.

In solidarity,

Maui Medic Healers Hui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:47:40 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Yes please! We need more homebirth midwives who can be trained through genuine experience within our communities to cultivate healthy connections throughout their lives. This is an ongoing passing along skills, tools and knowledge by way of natural humankindness. Homebirth midwives create supportive links for life. This enriches our community! Hb1328 can continue this effort. Books and degrees alone never indicate competency. We should all be weary of those who promote letters behind their name with confidence but lack experience...Uh hum, those who do not practice but have a loud voice. The awareness and ability to apply the care learned from women and families directly are irreplaceable. Hb1194 is a conscious effort to suppress midwives and midwifery practices, and disincentivize families from choosing homebirth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:52:45 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kii Kahoohanohano	HiHBC, Traditional Midwife of Taskforce, Malamanapuaohaumea and more????	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1328. This is a comprehensive bill that addresses ALL of the MULTIPLE flaws and incorporates all pathways and protections as promised in act 32 when it was passed. There is NO other bill that will do that. Hence, if not adopted not only will we return to the legislature for over another decade if need, but we will take this issue as currently planned and scheduled to trial. We would love to continue to work together to create TRUE solutions and forward progress, but will not settle again, for a flawed bill...

I sat as the traditional midwife on the task force appointed by the current law and have seen none of our recommendations after our dedication to this process on our own dime from neighboring islands, acknowledged or implemented. Year after year we are treated as trouble makers when all we want is GOOD laws, and to be honored. We have dedicated our LIVES to these protections at this point, which takes all of our energy away from the real work of serving our communities.

There are soooo many facts I could share and I'm certain others have covered them 😊 I personally would like to end by saying WE NEED YOU TO BE THE HEROES and SHEROES in this story!! Please let this saga of not listening to the needs of the people and of the largest number of licensed midwives in our state along with all those who endorse this masterpiece of legislative solutions end here in 2025. We need reproductive Justice now as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have the highest disparities of all people! We are needed more now than ever, the fires proved that. I was flown to the United Nations to speak on this issue, and they also back as top two priorities our concerns! It was not a small jesture for ACLU, OHA, NARM, Neighborhood board of Waimanalo, Multiple counties and commission/boards to endorse this bill. But they DID because it IS the solution to our long standing issues around reproductive autonomy and protections, as well as increase to access to care and educational pathways!! Please be apart of the TRUE solution! We have kindly laid it all out for you in this bill, and hope you have the COURAGE to ask hard questions, and do what is pono for the future of Hawai'i



Mālama,

Ki'inaniokalani Kaho'ohanohano

Plaintiff in Kaho'ohanohano vs State of Hawai'i



ACOG
The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

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

TO: House Committee on Health
Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

DATE: Monday, Feb 10, 2025
PLACE: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329

FROM: Hawai'i Section, ACOG
Dr. Angel Willey, MD, FACOG, Chair
Dr. Tiffinie R. Mercado, MD, FACOG, Vice-Chair
Dr. Ricardo A. Molero Bravo, MD, FACOG, Legislative Chair

Re: HB 1328 – Relating to Midwives
Position: OPPOSE

The Hawaii Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), representing physicians in Hawaii dedicated to advancing the health of all those in need of obstetric and gynecologic care, **OPPOSES HB 1328** which does not align with the State Auditor's report which called for full licensure, and the continued regulation of the practice of midwifery in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of pregnant people, infants, and their families.¹

ACOG agrees that midwifery care must be integrated within the healthcare system, with clear standards for education, competency, and professional conduct. Patients deserve to know whether their care provider meets established safety and education benchmarks.

HI ACOG is dedicated to the highest quality care for pregnant people and families of Hawai'i. **When given the information they need, a person can make the best choices for themselves and their families – we need to give them that information to empower them to make those choices.** Let people know who has received the training, expertise, and credentials to be licensed as a midwife in Hawai'i so they can choose for themselves who will care for them in this important time of their lives. For these reasons, HI ACOG **opposes HB 1328.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Auditor's Summary. Sunset Analysis: Regulation of Midwives. Report No. 25-03, January 2025

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:09:49 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Hamil	Banyan Birth LLC	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition of HB1328

I am a licensed midwife on the Big Island and respectfully ask you to vote no on HB1328. A licensure program exists to protect the consumer and HB1328 does not protect the birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

HB1328 does not require accredited education, does not provide title protection and does not support the advancement of the profession of midwifery.

Licensure based on completion of an accredited midwifery program meets the ICM global standards for midwifery education. Since the first accreditation of a midwifery program in 2002, the majority of states when implementing new licensure laws require MEAC education. This is in line with the growth of midwifery as a profession and upholds the safety of our communities above all else.

Title protection is an important element to consumer protection and informed choice.

Implementing a licensure program that has outdated language and scope of practice does not meet the current standards of midwifery and limits access to midwifery care, limits the overall scope of the profession and compromises the safety of birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:57:03 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shereen Hoopii	Pihana ka `Ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keep the PEP pathway open – making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these opitons, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted and available to our community. Every family deserve the right to choose their birth support – vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:01:19 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brynne Potter	North American Registry of Midwives	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

We thank you for the opportunity to testify today in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1328, Relating to Midwives.

This is a very thorough and comprehensive bill that will expand access to licensure and midwifery care in Hawai'i.

We recommend the addition of "Global Signature Authority" for the CPM be included in the language of HB1328.

As the credentialing body that oversees the evaluation and eligibility criteria for the Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) credential, NARM stands ready to be a partner with the state of Hawai'i in ensuring quality assurance and accountability for licensed midwives that serve the citizens of your communities.

Please support HB1328.

Best regards,

Brynne Potter
Executive Director, North American Registry of Midwives (NARM)



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the Senate Committees on
Health & Consumer Protection and Commerce

In Consideration of House Bill No. 1328
RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Lahaina Strong, we submit this testimony in **strong support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 35,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

As an organization rooted in the resilience and cultural strength of the Lahaina community, we recognize the critical importance of protecting reproductive autonomy and expanding access to culturally responsive care. The Hawaii State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including the ability to choose where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 advances these rights by:

- Supporting a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth while including family and support systems in the birthing experience.

- Allowing licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience.
- Expanding access to midwifery care through a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway to licensure, already utilized in 27 states and Washington, D.C.
- Balancing reproductive rights with consumer protections.
- Protecting Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat of criminalization.
- Protecting other religious and cultural birthing practices without fear of criminalization.
- Allowing traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure as long as they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

Two of our organizers, Jordan Ruidas and Courtney Lazo, have personally chosen and experienced home births. Like many families in Lahaina and across Hawai'i, we believe in the right of birthing people to choose where and with whom they give birth, and HB1328 supports that.

Access to culturally responsive, community-centered care is crucial for improving safety and well-being, especially for rural and underserved areas like ours in West Maui. For families recovering from the devastating impacts of recent events, access to traditional and home-based maternal care is not just a choice but a necessity.

H.B. 1328 addresses critical gaps in Hawaii's maternal healthcare system, providing options for those who may

Lahaina Strong respectfully urges you to **PASS HB1328**.

Mahalo for your time and dedication.

Sincerely,

Lahaina Strong

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:04:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Karp	PHYSIO WELLNESS LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of



Dr. Leah Lau Karp PT, DPT, CFMT

Kailua, HI - Oahu

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a Doctor of Physical Therapy specializing in pelvic floor therapy, a woman, and a daughter of Hawai'i. In my professional experience, midwifery is an essential component of

women's health, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth. The evidence is clear—midwifery care leads to better outcomes, reduces obstetric violence and trauma, and supports both mother and baby in profound ways.

As an Asian Pacific Islander, I deeply resonate with the cultural and community traditions of midwifery, which have been passed down through generations. To restrict access to midwifery is not only a disservice to maternal health but also an erosion of a woman's right to honor her cultural heritage. Every woman deserves the freedom to choose the birthing experience that aligns with her values, traditions, and well-being. I strongly urge support for HB 1328 to protect and preserve this fundamental right.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
-
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
-
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
-
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
-
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
-
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

-
- **It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.**
-
- **It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.**
-
- **Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.**
-
- **Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.**
-
- **Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.**
-
-

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,

Leah Lau Karp

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:26:05 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uncle Ben Simpson	uncle bens llc	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition of HB1328

We live on Hawaii island and respectfully ask you to vote no on HB1328. Unlicensed medical providers are simply dangerous. A birthworker has the ability to save lives or neglect them. Hawaii parents put their lives & the life of their new child in the hands of birthworkers. Without a licensure requirement for midwives that includes formal education parents can be fooled into thinking that they are receiving educated evidence based care when they are not, until sometimes it is far too late.

A licensure program exists to protect the consumer and HB1328 does not protect the birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

HB1328 does not require accredited education, does not provide title protection and does not support the advancement of the profession of midwifery.

Licensure based on completion of an accredited midwifery program meets the ICM global standards for midwifery education. Since the first accreditation of a midwifery program in 2002, the majority of states when implementing new licensure laws require MEAC education. This is in line with the growth of midwifery as a profession and upholds the safety of our communities above all else.

Title protection is an important element to consumer protection and informed choice.

Implementing a licensure program that has outdated language and scope of practice does not meet the current standards of midwifery and limits access to midwifery care, limits the overall scope of the profession and compromises the safety of birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

Again, PLEASE VOTE NO for HB1328

Save lives! - ben



Papa Ola Lokahi
677 Ala Moana Blvd #720
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ www.papaolalokahi.org

House Committee on Health

Representative Gregg Takayama, Chair
Representative Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy,
Vice Chair

**House Committee on Consumer
Protection & Commerce**

Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory Chun, Vice Chair

Monday, February 10, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Re: HB1328– Relating to Midwives
Position: Comment

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committees,
Papa Ola Lōkahi (POL) appreciates the opportunity to testify on **HB1328**, which would continue a licensing scheme for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives, to be overseen by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, reestablishes the home birth task force to provide recommendations on issues related to home births and requires reports to the Legislature. POL respectfully provides **comments** for these committees' considerations.

POL defers any discussion of certification and licensure to the communities of those professions. As the Native Hawaiian Health Board, POL is exclusively concerned with 1) Native Hawaiians' access to quality and culturally responsive care for birthing people and their keiki and 2) the preservation, protection and perpetuation of traditional Native Hawaiian healing practices. Our comments largely relate to our second concern—ensuring traditional Native Hawaiian healers and their practices are protected—as that is most relevant to the text of the bill as currently written.

Both federal and state law recognize the critical importance of protecting, preserving and perpetuating traditional Native Hawaiian healing practices. The Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. §122)—through which Congress established Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems and the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship program—recognizes and affirms the importance of Hawaiians' ability to practice and gain access to traditional healing practices.

The State Constitution also makes paramount the protection of Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices in Article XII Section 7: “the State reaffirms and shall protect all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural and religious purposes and possessed

Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.

by ahupua'a tenants who are descendants of native Hawaiians who inhabited the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778, subject to the right of the State to regulate such rights.”

Finally, state statute recognizes the importance of traditional Native Hawaiian healing in HRS 453-2(c) and HRS 457J-6(c). The former, HRS 453-2(c), exempts traditional Native Hawaiian healing practitioners from medical licensure and designates POL with recognizing Kupuna Councils. The latter, HRS 457J-6(c), makes clear that midwifery regulation shall not prohibit practices by traditional Hawaiian healers recognized by Kupuna Councils or as protected by the State Constitution.

Papa Ola Lōkahi appreciates this bill's attempt to clarify the legislative intent of the law as passed in 2019. We support efforts to articulate that the State Constitutional protection for Native Hawaiians practicing our traditions and customs is paramount and controls regardless of statute. We also appreciate an endeavor to protect the already recognized value of traditional Native Hawaiian healers having the autonomy to determine the continuation of Hawaiian healing practices. POL believes it is best to prioritize recognition of healing practices and healers by the kupuna councils as recognized in HRS 453-2(c) rather than creating a new regulatory or recognition scheme.

The current draft of the bill exempts “person[s] engaged in traditional Native Hawaiian healing practices of prenatal, maternal, or child care” and further references Constitutional protections for traditional Native Hawaiian customary practices. This language amends the current exemption for Native Hawaiian traditional healers as found in HRS 457J-6(c). **POL believes this exemption as written clarifies the legislative intent established in 2019 when the midwifery regulations were passed.** If this committee decides to pass this measure, **our organization would be supportive of the continued inclusion of this provision or a similar simplified exemption.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB1328. If you have any further questions, please contact our Director of Policy & Strategy, Ke'ōpū Reelitz at kreelitz@papaolalokahi.org.



February 9, 2025

Members of the House Health and Consumer Protection & Commerce Committees

FROM: Whitney Herrelson, LM

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB1328

I am a Licensed Midwife practicing full time in Maui and I own Maui Midwifery LLC.

I strongly support HB1328, a bill that represents the needs of the midwifery community, promotes diversity in the midwifery workforce, and expands access to critical maternal healthcare services across Hawai'i.

HB1328 reflects the values and priorities of the majority of the midwifery community by ensuring a pathway to licensure for local midwives while also protecting the cultural significance of traditional Hawaiian birth practices.

As a midwife who had to leave the islands to obtain my training and licensure, I experienced firsthand the challenge of returning to serve my community without deep knowledge of the local culture or specific health concerns unique to our population. This bill helps prevent this disconnect by allowing midwives to train and become licensed here at home, ensuring culturally competent care for the families we serve.

Importantly, HB1328 allows Certified Midwives (CMs) and Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) to practice to their full scope, aligning Hawai'i with national midwifery standards. It also supports Medicaid reimbursement for midwifery services, which is crucial for increasing access to perinatal care for underserved families. Ensuring Medicaid coverage will make midwifery care more accessible, improving birth outcomes and reducing healthcare disparities in our communities.

There is no evidence that mandating midwifery licensure improves public safety. Instead, rigid regulations often create unnecessary barriers that reduce the availability of skilled midwives, particularly those serving marginalized and rural communities. Protecting the role of midwives—including those practicing traditional Hawaiian birth work—is essential to preserving cultural birth practices while expanding access to safe and compassionate maternity care.

HB1328 is a step forward in recognizing the value of midwives in our healthcare system, increasing workforce diversity, and ensuring that local families have access to the care they need. I urge you to pass this bill and support a future in which midwifery is an accessible, culturally rooted, and sustainable profession in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Whitney Herrelson, LM
Maui Midwifery LLC
Member, Maui County Commission on the Status of Women
Member, State of Hawai'i Midwifery Advisory Committee





KO`OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

February 8, 2025

Testimony in Support of Hawaii HB1328 Relating to Midwives

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club (KPHCC) submits this testimony in strong support of HB1328 Relating to Midwives. KPHCC is a not-for-profit community organization established in 1937 by a group of kama'āina residents in the Ko'olaupoko area. Our primary mission is to preserve and perpetuate the history, heritage, and culture of Native Hawaiians.

Hawaii has a long history of cultural practices related to birth, with many families seeking birth care from community midwives and other traditional birth attendants. The midwifery profession in Hawaii is not just a clinical practice—it is an integral part of the cultural heritage and identity of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. These practices have been passed down through generations and are vital for ensuring that birthing families feel supported, respected, and heard. HB 1328 is an important step forward in improving access to culturally competent, safe, and respectful care for all families, especially in the context of traditional practices and community-based birth options.

HB1328 addresses a critical gap in healthcare access. Cultural competency in healthcare is essential, particularly when it comes to childbirth, as it is a deeply personal, spiritual, and transformative experience. Many families, particularly those from Hawaiian and Pacific Islander backgrounds, prefer to work with midwives who respect their traditions and understand their cultural needs. This bill would support midwives who are trained in both contemporary and traditional methods of care, ensuring that birthing families can make the choice that feels right for them, without fear of judgment or discrimination.

In addition to supporting cultural practices, HB1328 will improve access to midwifery care for all residents of Hawaii, regardless of geographic location. For many in rural and underserved communities, midwives may be the only accessible birth practitioners. By allowing the ability of midwives to practice and receive the support they need, this bill directly addresses health disparities and increases the availability of safe, respectful, and culturally sensitive care for birthing families across the state.

I respectfully urge this committee to support HB1328.

Me ke aloha,

Charles Na'umu Pelekikena (President)
Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is one of the largest in the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs nationwide. Ko'olaupoko HCC is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians and providing leadership and scholarships. Its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart."



KO'OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB

The Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club was established in 1937 and is one of the largest in the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs nationwide. Ko'olaupoko HCC is a not-for-profit community organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history, heritage and culture of Native Hawaiians and providing leadership and scholarships. Its membership is open to people of Hawaiian ancestry and those who are "Hawaiian at heart."

P. O. Box 664 * Kaneohe, HI 96744
Email: koolaupokohcc@gmail.com * Website: www.koolaupoko-hcc.org

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:53:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Palmer	American College of Nurse Midwives	Support	In Person

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting testimony in support of the CM language within the HB1328 bill which seeks to clarify and uplift the CM credential to align with ACNM Standards of practice supported by the HI Auditor reports initially in 1989 within the HI Department of Health. This legislation specific to the Certified Midwife (CM) credential would establish the equivalence of the CM to the existing CNM credential that is included in the APRN/CNM legislation. The inclusion of the CM to the current perinatal provider landscape would serve to increase access to care and access to a non-nurse midwifery educational pathway. The language articulated in this bill relating to the CM aligns with ACNM standards. Gratitude to all the midwives and midwife supporters who have worked on midwifery legislation that enables more families to access midwifery care that is safe and accountable.

Michelle Palmer PhD, CNM, FACNM

Region 7 Representative, ACNM

February 9, 2025

To: Honorable members of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, House of Representatives, Hawai'i State Legislature

From: Marian Seliquini, CM, MS

Re: In support of HB1328

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB1328. My comments are to specifically address the licensing and regulation of the Certified Midwife (CM) credential. My background as it pertains to this testimony is as follows.

I am the President of the Association of Certified Midwives, an affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) that represents and supports the professional issues specific to the CM credential. ACNM is the professional organization representing Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives (CMs) in the United States.

I am the Chair of the ACNM's Committee of Midwife Advocates for the Certified Midwife, which supports legislative efforts across the US to license CMs to practice to the full extent of their professional education and clinical training.

Clinically, I am the Director of Midwifery Services within a large Federally Qualified Health Center system in the Hudson Valley region of New York, where I manage the women's health departments at two clinical sites and lead a team of midwives working collaboratively with ObGyns to provide full scope midwifery care, including management of births in our adjacent community hospital. Within our department, CNMs and CMs work seamlessly together, providing the same quality of care with the same scope of practice, as intended by our professional organizations.

Act 32 (2019) initiated a licensure program for non-nurse midwives, including CMs. This program will sunset in 2025. HB 1328 importantly continues a licensure program for CMs and correctly aligns the scope of practice for and professional standards for CMs with their education, training, and certification.

CMs and CNMs meet equivalent requirements and have the same scope of practice. CMs and CNMs are educated together in graduate-level programs accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). CMs and CNMs pass the same national certification examination administered by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB).

CMs and CNMs must demonstrate that they meet the Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice of the ACNM upon completion of their midwifery education and practice in accordance with ACNM Standards for the Practice of Midwifery. To maintain their certification, CMs and CNMs must recertify every 5 years through AMCB. For CMs and CNMs, these competencies, standards, and certification processes are the same.

Midwifery as practiced by CNMs and CMs includes the independent provision of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; sexual and reproductive health; gynecologic health; and family planning services, including preconception care. CNMs and CMs also provide care for the healthy newborn through the first 28 days of life as well as primary care for individuals

from adolescence through the lifespan. CNMs and CMs provide initial and ongoing comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. They conduct physical examinations; prescribe medications including controlled substances and contraceptive methods; admit, manage, and discharge patients; order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic tests and order the use of medical devices. Midwifery care also includes health promotion, disease prevention, and individualized wellness education and counseling. These services are provided in partnership with women and families in diverse settings such as ambulatory care clinics, private offices, community and public health systems, homes, hospitals, and birth centers.

Midwifery care provided by CMs and CNMs is evidence-based and can improve maternal and newborn outcomes. Studies show that better integration of CNMs and CMs, practicing to the full extent of their education, clinical training, and certification, within a team-based care model, can help prevent maternal deaths, reduce disparities, and improve access to healthcare. Broadening the maternal health care workforce by licensing CMs also reduces strain on nursing education programs, which are unable to meet the needs of our healthcare workforce and turn away thousands of applicants every year.

Unnecessary restrictions on the scope of practice for which CMs and CNMs are trained results in underutilization of midwifery care. Further, as I have seen in my work supporting state midwifery legislative processes, CMs are unlikely to seek a license in a state where they are not able to practice to their full scope. At a time when maternal health care needs are so important, removing unnecessary restrictions to midwifery care are paramount. HB 1328 correctly aligns the CM scope of practice with the scope of practice already established for CNMs. By taking this step, Hawai'i will benefit from an expansion in the number of qualified, highly trained maternal health care providers.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

I welcome questions and can be reached at: ACMidwives@gmail.com

Respectfully,

Marian Seliqini

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:57:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jasmine Maes, LM, CPM	Nightbloom Birth, LLC	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am a Licensed Midwife and CPM practicing on Kauai for the past 5 years. I have read HB1328 and am in full support of the bill. Please approve this bill so we can move forward as a community in defining and elevating safe and culturally appropriate practices around birth in Hawaii. Lets stop fighting over who can care for families and increase access for all. The bill is well written and has excellent support.

Mahalo,

Jasmine Maes, LM, CPM



Native Hawaiian LEGAL CORPORATION

1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1205 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Phone (808) 521-2302 • Fax (808) 537-4268 • www.nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org



Testimony to the
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

Relating to House Bill 1328

Relating to Midwives. Continues a licensing scheme for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives, to be overseen by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Re-establishes the home birth task force to provide recommendations on issues related to home births. Dissolves the task force on 6/30/2026. Requires reports to the Legislature.

January 10, 2025

2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Aloha e Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi and members of the House of Representatives Committees on Health and Consumer Protection & Commerce:

The Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (“NHLC”) offers the following comments on House Bill 1328 (“HB1328”) – Relating to Midwives.

In February of 2024, NHLC, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and the law firm Perkins Coie filed a lawsuit, *Kaho‘ohano‘ohano v. State of Hawai‘i*, on behalf of maternal care providers challenging the current licensing law that regulates the practice of midwifery, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (“HRS”) §457J. Our clients complained that, among other things, HRS §457J unconstitutionally restricts Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, including pale keiki, ho‘ohānau, and hānau. These practices are protected under Article XII Section 7 of the Hawai‘i Constitution, yet HRS §457J sets forth requirements to practice that cultural practitioners had no practical pathway to achieve. Further, if they practiced without meeting the requirements, they could be subject to criminal and civil penalties. HRS §457J seemed to provide a pathway for traditional and customary practitioners with this language:

“Nothing . . . shall prohibit healing practices by traditional Hawaiian healers engaged in traditional healing practices of prenatal, maternal, and child care as recognized by any council of kūpuna convened by Papa Ola Lōkahi.”

HRS §457J-6(b) (emphasis added).

The problem, though, is that Papa Ola Lōkahi, a nonprofit organization burdened by the legislature to hold this kuleana in HRS §457J, in fact had no process for recognizing them. So effectively, that language in HRS §457J was a false door that practitioners had no way to walk through.

After filing the complaint, Plaintiffs filed a motion for preliminary injunction seeking to enjoin the State from enforcing HRS §457J, because the case against the law’s constitutionality was strong, and the harms being caused to our clients, the practices they perpetuate, and the people they serve were severe. After hearing from a total of 15 witnesses – 11 called by our clients and 4 called by the State – the Court concluded that we were right on this issue and granted a statewide injunction. The statewide preliminary injunction issued by the Court is still in place, and the trial in the matter is set to start on January 19, 2026.

HB1328 addresses the concerns of Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners that prompted the filing of the lawsuit. HB1328 amends HRS §457J so that the Midwifery Licensure Law does not require a practitioner “engaged in traditional Native Hawaiian healing practices of prenatal, maternal, or child care” to obtain a midwifery license. HB1328’s clear exemption for cultural practitioners provides a workable pathway for them to engage in traditional and customary hānau practices without the risk that they will be subject to the civil and criminal penalties under HRS §457J. By establishing this clear exemption for traditional Native Hawaiian customary practices, HB1328 protects the rights of Native Hawaiian practitioners of pale keiki, hānau, and ho‘ohānau consistent with the State’s constitutional obligations under Article XII Section 7.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,



Kirsha K.M. Durante
Litigation Director

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
American American Academy of Pediatrics- Hawaii Chapter	American Academy of Pediatrics- Hawaii Chapter	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Casandra Simonson MD,FAAP and I am writing on behalf of the Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. We represent over 200 pediatricians in Hawaii and we are submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 1328 – Relating to Midwives.

We strongly oppose HB 1328 because it undermines the safety of pregnant individuals and newborns by removing essential licensing requirements for midwives. The Hawai‘i State Auditor has recommended full licensure to ensure midwives meet professional standards, and leading organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) support regulated, evidence-based midwifery care.

Without proper licensure, families may struggle to distinguish between qualified and unqualified providers, increasing the risk of poor outcomes. Regulation does not restrict choice—it ensures that all midwives are trained, accountable, and equipped to provide safe care.

For the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s mothers and babies, we respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Casandra Simonson MD FAAP

American Academy of Pediatrics- Hawaii Chapter



Committees: Health and Consumer Protection and Commerce
Hearing Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 at 2:00 pm
Location: Conference Room 329 and via Videoconference
Re: **ACLU of Hawai'i Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1328
Relating to Midwives**

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and Committee Members:

The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to safeguarding and advancing civil rights and liberties enshrined in our federal and Hawai'i Constitutions. We **strongly support H.B. 1328 Relating to Midwives** as it aligns with our mandate to protect and advance reproductive autonomy, privacy, and traditional and customary rights in our federal and Hawai'i Constitutions.

Reproductive freedom does not simply mean access to abortion. Broadly speaking, it includes a person's right to make decisions relating to procreation, contraception, abortion, IVF¹, reproductive health care, **the manner in which one gives birth, whom they choose they give birth with, and much more.**

Hawaii's Legacy as a Champion for Reproductive Freedom

Hawai'i has a long track record of protecting reproductive freedom as a fundamental right guaranteed under article 1, sections 3, 5, and 6 of the Hawai'i State Constitution.

In 1970, Hawai'i was the first state to legalize abortion upon request of the individual. In the aftermath of *Roe vs. Wade* being overturned, the State Legislature passed S.B. 1 that expands access to reproductive health care services and protects Hawai'i health care providers from punitive legal action from within or outside of the state relating to the provision of legally provided reproductive health care services.²

In 2019, the Hawai'i State Legislature enacted Act 32, the Midwifery Restriction Law. Despite good intentions, the licensure law that included an exemption for birth attendants to practice without a license (subject to certain restrictions and with mandatory disclosures to clients) ended on July 1, 2023.

¹ The Alabama Supreme Court recently issued a decision attacking IVF that forced IVF providers across the state to halt services, leaving the families depending on these services in limbo.

<https://www.aclualabama.org/en/news/alabama-courts-extreme-ruling-puts-ivf-treatments-risk>

² https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2023/bills/SB1_SD2_.pdf

In 2024, our Attorney General interpreted Act 32 as criminalizing trusted traditional midwives, doulas, lactation consultants, counselors, childbirth educators, cultural practitioners, and even grandmothers simply because they are not licensed under the narrow and exclusionary regulatory scheme that still exists.

Current Litigation Challenges the Constitutionality of ACT 32

Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation and the Center for Reproductive Rights are currently suing the State of Hawai'i, demanding the judiciary intervene and find ACT 32, H.R.S. section 457-J the Midwifery Law as unconstitutional.³

At the lower court level, Judge Shirley Kawamura has ruled that HRS 457-J violates the Hawai'i State Constitution's protections for Native Hawaiian's traditional and customary rights and has issued a temporary injunction to stop the criminalization of Native Hawaiian practitioners and their students.

While ACLU of Hawai'i agrees that the current law is unconstitutional and threatens to criminalize indigenous healers and midwives and intimidates the families who seek their services - disproportionately impacting Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women, a legislative solution is in sight. H.B. 1328 is the solution!

A Legislative Solution in on the Horizon

The silver lining is that Act 32 will sunset on June 30, 2025. This provides an opportunity for the Hawai'i Legislature to enact a law that expands midwifery licensure pathways. In turn, this will increase workforce development opportunities for residents in Hawai'i choosing to seek a Certified Professional Midwives certification through the Portfolio Evaluation Pathway and increase access to health services and care to remedy the stark inequities in the current statute.

We are asking for your support of H.B. 1328 to repair the harms unintentionally caused by Act 32.

The Urgency of Now

The passage of H.B. 1328 is critically urgent given the attacks on reproductive autonomy rights at the federal level and stark health outcome disparities within Hawai'i. The sad reality is that reproductive health care services continue to be less accessible to many people, especially people who are experiencing houselessness and poverty, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and residents who live in rural areas and on the neighbor islands.

³ *Kaho'ohanohano vs. State of Hawai'i* is scheduled for trial in early 2026. The passage of a replacement midwifery licensure statute that removes the unconstitutional provisions may avert the current litigation. In turn, this will allow the State to focus on legitimate threats to civil rights and liberties in Hawai'i and save taxpayer dollars.

Data must be used to drive public policies and address health care disparities in Hawai'i. **“Nationally, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander people have the highest pregnancy related mortality ratio among all women of races, with 62.8 deaths per 100,000 live births -compared to a rate of 39.9 for non -Hispanic Black Women and 14.1 for non-Hispanic white women.”**⁴

Given the constitutional rights impacted by a midwifery licensure statute and these stark health care disparities in Hawai'i, we support H.B. 1328 as it effectuates the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience.
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credential, training and experience.
- Expands access to midwifery care by recognizing multiple pathways to the Certified Professional Midwifery licensure. The proposed bill would allow licensure through the MEAC pathway or the nationally recognized Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) Plus Bridge apprenticeship pathway.
 - Midwives who complete a MEAC schooling must successfully pass the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) exam to earn the Certified Professional Midwifery credential and certificate.
 - Midwives who completed the PEP Plus Bridge apprenticeship pathway must pass the same NARM exam as students who complete the MEAC schooling to earn the Certified Professional Midwifery credential and certificate.
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing without the threat or fear of unreasonable regulation and criminalization. The statutory language in H.B. 1328, clearly identifies these practices as an exemption. (p. 34).
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization with a clear exemption. (p. 34)
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure and record retention requirements. (p. 35)

⁴ The U.S. leads the developed world in maternal and infant mortality. The U.S. ranks around 50th in the world for maternal safety. Center for Reproductive Rights, 2024.

- Allows extended family members, friends and other birth professionals (i.e. doulas, lactation consults, childbirth educators, etc.) to be exempt from the midwifery licensure requirements.

In summary, **H.B. 1328** reflects a path forward – a path that advances reproductive autonomy, privacy and traditional and customary rights, and ultimately health equity for members of our beloved community in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **H.B. 1328, ACLU of Hawaii’s top reproductive justice legislative priority** for 2025.

Sincerely,

Carrie Ann Shiota

Carrie Ann Shiota
Policy Director
ACLU Hawai‘i
(808) 380-7052

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai‘i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai‘i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai‘i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai‘i has been serving Hawai‘i for over 50 years.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96801
T: 808.522.5900
F: 808.522.5909
E: office@acluhawaii.org
www.acluhawaii.org

Laulani Teale, MPH
Ho'opae Pono Peace Project
Ea Hānau Cultural Council



February 9, 2025

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato
Rep. Cory M. Chun
Rep. Lisa Marten
Rep. Ikaika Olds

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi
Rep. David Alcos III
Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan
Rep. Linda Ichiyama
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto
Rep. Sam Satoru Kong

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen
Rep. Lisa Marten
Rep. Adrian K. Tam
Rep. Elijah Pierick

Testimony in Support of HB 1328 & In Opposition to HB 1194

Aloha e Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

I come before you today to respectfully urge you to **please pass HB 1328**, and please hold HB 1194, which is clearly a well-intentioned measure, but simply will not work.

I am a practitioner of laau lapaau and many other cultural practices, who attends births. As an independent Kanaka Maoli cultural practitioner, **I practice “midwifery”** as defined in both HRS 457J and HB 1194, and have been and would be **criminalized** by either measure, as the requirements for cultural practitioners in both measures are contrary to my cultural mandates.

Much more seriously than my own practice being affected is the effect upon **elders**, both kūpuna Kanaka Maoli and birth-knowledgeable elders of other ethnicities that I and others have learned from, and continue to learn from. Intergenerational transmission of knowledge is the very heart of cultural learning, and interfering with its ability to flow from one generation to the next is the extinguishment of those practices.

As the convenor of the Ea Hānau Cultural Council, I am deeply concerned about the **intergenerational transmission of knowledge** that has been severely impacted over the past five years, and would be further harmed by HB 1194. This applies especially to extended families, which are a major way in which knowledge is transmitted.

There is **no known instance of harm** in this intergenerational birth knowledge transmission, which occurs by actually practicing family midwifery traditions. If the practice does not happen, the knowledge is lost. Considering the rich cultural heritage of all of the many ethnicities in Hawai'i that have these deep cultural midwifery practices, this is a lot to lose, especially during an active maternal health crisis in which so few resources are realistically available to our communities.

I believe that the intentions of HB1194 were good. However, it is simply impossible to create something as comprehensive as our community needs without the rigorous, extensive community vetting process that we went through for several years to produce HB1328, involving all of the incredibly diverse knowledge that went into it about the complex needs of our community.

One of the most important aspects of HB 1328 is the task force, to resolve any remaining concerns that have not already been addressed by this very comprehensive bill. We are sincerely committed to resolving genuine concerns, as was done in the creation of HB1328. I am confident that we can merge our efforts in a truly excellent way, if given the opportunity.

Attached, please find some information on the effects of both measures on the Kanaka Maoli community. We sincerely hope that you will consider the urgency of these very real effects on our endangered, important Indigenous cultural ways.

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,



Laulani Teale, MPH

Coordinator, Ho'opae Pono Peace Project

<https://www.eapono.org>



Maui midwives, student midwives, and other hānau practitioners at a Midwife Gathering in Maui in January, 2025. Many of the student midwives are Lahaina fire survivors who found their calling while helping their communities at the fire relief hubs in West Maui.

2025 Midwife Licensure - Kanaka Maoli Impacts

Areas of Effect	HRS 457J (existing law)	HB 1194	HB 1328
Focus	Licensure of “midwifery,” meaning <i>any</i> care or advice given to any pregnant, birthing, postpartum person	Continues HRS 457J with amendments. Licensure of “practice of midwifery,” meaning care provided independently to a pregnant, birthing, postpartum person	Licensure of clinical professionals: Certified Midwives (CM) & Certified Professional Midwives (CPM), including PEP
Reproductive Choice/ Self-Determination	Reduced	Further reduced	Increased
Access to Licensure	No Kanaka Maoli have yet been able to achieve licensure (MEAC schooling is US Continent-based). 97% are not from Hawai’i	Kanaka & local licensure unlikely (same MEAC schooling requirement as current law, which is inaccessible in Hawai’i)	PEP (apprenticeship & testing) licensure pathway is accessible in Hawai’i
Access to Care	Legal access to care is severely reduced	Legal access to care is even more severely reduced than the current law	Legal access to care is greatly increased
Kanaka Maoli Cultural Practice	Cultural practices are effectively criminalized due to lack of clear exemptions and prohibitive barriers	Cultural practitioners are required to comply with technical, potentially humiliating tasks (eg stating orally and via State form that the practitioner is “not a midwife,” etc) and 10-year record keeping in order to qualify for their exemption	Cultural practitioners exempt.
Extended Family	Only parent, child, spouse, sibling exempt	Only parent, child, spouse, sibling exempt	All family exempt, including extended and hānai
Other Cultural Practices	Not legal to practice. <i>This is important for Kanaka Maoli because Kanaka birthing people often choose attendants from other cultures to attend their births, and to learn skills from in order to revitalize their Kanaka traditions.</i>	Not legal to practice.	Established practices are allowed according to similar exemption as Hawai’i’s Nursing law.
Insurance	Not currently eligible	Not supported	Support for Medicaid
Main Supporters	Professional Organizations (MAH, medical)	MAH	OHA, ACLU, HHBC, Hawaiian Rights Orgs
Main effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - licensure in effect for CPMs, CMs - all others made illegal unless exempt - reduced access to care - increase (40%) in unassisted births - significant increase in underground care - hospital transport communication and willingness to be transported reduced when attendant = illegal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - licensure made more restrictive for CPMs/CMs - no clear protections for any traditional attendant - reduced access to care - further increase in unassisted births probable - increase in underground care probable - hospital transport communication further reduced due to mandatory protocols that birthing families oppose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - licensure for CPMs/CMs with PEP (apprenticeship/testing) local pathway - CPMs/CMs allowed to practice to their full scope of training - protects cultural practice - increased access to care - reduction in unassisted births probable - hospital transport communication increased with task force for solution-building

2025 Midwife Licensure - Effects on Kanaka Maoli

Quick Facts

- **ZERO Kanaka Maoli** have ever been licensed as midwives in Hawai'i.
- **97% of Midwives licensed in Hawai'i are not from Hawai'i.** Licensure strongly favors people from US Continent. There is currently **no** realistic access for local midwives.
- **Hānau is our OLDEST Kanaka cultural practice.** Many of our traditions are in real danger of actual **extinguishment** because kupuna are forced to stop or work deep underground.
- **Traditionally, the primary practitioner of hānau is the person giving birth.** All others are supporting practitioners.
- **There is NO proof that licensure increases safety** or that exemption increases risk. Licensure is beneficial for clinical administrative purposes such as insurance and prescriptions but does NOT make birth safer.
- **There IS proof that access to cultural care increases safety.** This is especially important in **rural** and **crisis** areas such as Lahaina.

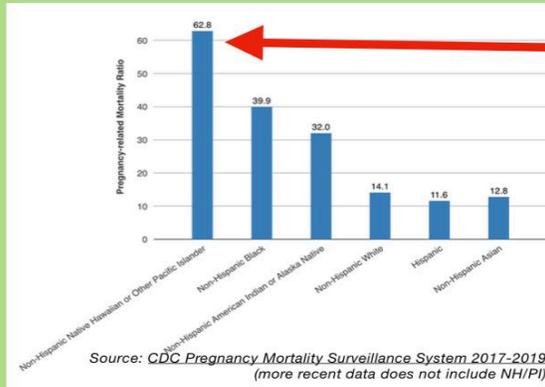
Historic Context:

SIX BABIES were born at Kapi'olani in **1890**. The rest were born at home or in community. Following the **1893** takeover, kahuna & midwives were both persecuted. **Licensure** was used to eradicate practices by making it too burdensome to continue. For example, the **Kahuna Lā'au Lapa'au** written exam on Hawaiian herbs required names in **Latin**. Midwife licensure was never achieved by Hawaiians at all, though Hawaiian midwives continued underground in their communities,

Culturally, "**Midwife**" is a term bestowed on knowledgeable practitioners who assist hānau, generally by the "aunties" of the community. In Hawaiian culture, midwives are trusted community members (often elder men) known for their ability to encourage & support, as well as for their deep respect, humility, understanding & knowledge.

A REAL SAFETY risk: Lack of culturally sound ACCESS

When discussing safety, it is important to look at the **actual risks** in question. There is an "attributed risk" of **0** to cultural home birth, because **no evidence of any harm** has been associated with these practices. On the other hand, extremely high risk can be shown in association with **lack of self-determination** and **lack of cultural access**.



It is important to note that **NONE** of these deaths have been in any way associated with home birth, but **are** associated with Indigenous health disparities related to **loss of self-determination** and also to **trauma**, including maternal health trauma, associated with colonization.

Lack of access to cultural care is also a known maternal health factor.

The health disparities experienced by Hawaiians are deeply intertwined with historic events and ongoing colonialism. This loss has led to significant health inequities, that are best addressed by restoration of self-determination, including the choice of who touches their bodies.

"Nationally, **Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander** people have the **highest pregnancy related mortality** ratio among all women of all races, with **62.8 deaths** per 100,000 live births—compared to a rate of 39.9 for non-Hispanic Black women and 14.1 for non-Hispanic white women. According to the World Health Organization, **increasing midwifery interventions could avert 41% of maternal deaths**, as well as **39% of neonatal deaths and 26% of stillbirths.**" -Center for Reproductive Rights, 2024

Kaho'ohanohano vs. State <https://reproductiverights.org/case/kahoohanohano-v-hawaii/>

A REAL SAFETY risk: Hospital Transport Barriers

An important part of keeping home births safe is the **ability to transport** to hospital care when necessary. **Communication** between the attendant and doctors is extremely important. **This is impossible** if the practitioners are criminalized, unless attendants and parents are willing to risk CWS & penalties. It is also important to understand that many home births parents have already experienced severe **obstetric trauma**. A midwife cannot force a birthing person to go to a hospital, even if it is advisable. Many late transports that are blamed on midwives by hospitals are actually due to parents refusing to be transported, due to trauma and fear (note that these are supported by documented safety concerns). **Stigma of illegality** worsens this.

Some of the organizations endorsing HB 1328:

ACLU of Hawai'i
 Chamber of Sustainable Commerce
 Hawai'i Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives
Hawai'i County Council
 Hawaii Home Birth Collective
 Hawaii Midwifery Council
Ka Lāhui Hawai'i
Kaua'i County Council
 Kona Coast La Leche League
Kūlaniākea
Lahaina Strong

Maui County Council
 Maui County Commission on the Status of Women
 Maui Housing Hui
Maui Medics Healers Hui
Maui Rapid Response
 Nawahineakauhiakama
Office of Hawaiian Affairs
 Waimanalo Neighborhood Board

...and many more!

see full list on hihbc.org

Learn More: <https://hihbc.org>, <https://pacificbirthcollective.org>, <https://www.eahanau.org>, <https://www.acluhi.org>



HAWAII STATE CENTER FOR NURSING

Connecting Nurses. Transforming Healthcare.

**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health
and
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Monday, February 10, 2025, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 329 and videoconference
by
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Testimony with Comments on H.B. 1328

Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and members of the committees:

This measure addresses licensure for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives and other functions related to education, training, and practice for the profession.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing (HSCN) takes no position on the substance of this measure and wishes to comment on only as it pertains to Section 2, 457J-J Exemptions on Page 33, lines 10-11 which states that this part does not require a midwifery license if the person is a: “ (1) Certified nurse-midwife holding a valid license under chapter 457”.

Certified Nurse Midwives are licensed pursuant to chapter 457, the Nurse Practice Act, as one of the for qualifying roles for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse licensure. Due to the duplicity in the term “midwife” for both APRNs under Chapter 457 and the professionals that this measure addresses, it is prudent to clarify that the use of the title “midwife” is acceptable for licensees under both chapters. Further, for nurses who have advanced education, training and certification as midwives, their scope of practice is established in the Nurse Practice Act (Chapter 457).

The simple exclusion found in Section 2, 457J-J Exemptions on Page 33, lines 10-11 sufficiently provides this clarity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. While HSCN takes no position on the substance of this measure, HSCN appreciates the opportunity to comment on the content pertaining to nurses.

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center is to engage in nursing workforce research, promote best practices and disseminate knowledge, cultivate a diverse and well-prepared workforce, support healthy work environments, champion lifelong learning, and strategically plan for sound nursing workforce policy.



Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Vice Chair
Committee on Health

Monday, February 10, 2025
2:00 PM Conference Room 329

RE: **HB1328** Midwifery Licensure - **Support**

**Hawaii Legislative
Council Members**

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko
Family Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life
Natural Foods
Hilo

Tanya Aynessazian
Principal Contractor

Chamber of
Sustainable Commerce
808.445.7606
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI 96823

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Loy, and Members of the Committee,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 450 small businesses and entrepreneurs across the state that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity. As small business owners who believe we can strengthen Hawaii's economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment, we urge this committee to support HB1328, which expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway to licensure that is recognized in 27 states and Washington DC. Access to midwifery care improves health outcomes for all birthing individuals and their children.

Did you know that half of Hawaii's hospitals have labor and delivery units?

HB1328 responds to Hawaii's maternal healthcare needs, particularly in rural areas and neighbor islands by allowing licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training and experience.

Do you believe in the right to choose?

An individual's power of choice on where, how and with when they experience pregnancy care and childbirth is an exercise of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. HB1328 balances reproductive rights and consumer protections, while protecting religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat of criminalization. Traditional birth attendants would be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

HB1328 is supported by OHA, ACLU of Hawaii, Hawaii Home Birth Collective, Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club, Hawaii County, Maui County, Kauai County and the Commission on the Status of Women, Maui County. The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce recognizes the importance of midwives in our community, safeguarding the health of mothers, babies and the cultural knowledge of birthing practices.

Thank you for your thoughtful reflection before creating regulations that impact one the most important experiences we go through as women and as a species, childbirth, and the welcoming in of baby human beings. Having the right to choose how, with whom and where we "deliver" the life we created empowers mothers. This matters.
Support HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:39:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Piper Lovemore	Mothering Justice	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mothering Justice supports this bill as the genuine voice of the People.

As the practice of midwifery is lobbied and litigated all across the U.S., here emerges a unique and practical solution, that could serve as a resounding precedent, should Hawai'i recognize herein the potential to lead this nation's colonial blunder out of crisis. Self important, self imposed and deadly, maternity care today is suffering from delusions of its own grandeur.

Respectfully, Hawai'i seeks to exempt itself from this clearly mistaken path and heal through rediscovering, reemphasizing that which was never broken, never so egregiously harmful as its current counterpart, but simply maligned in a shameful and embarrassing chapter of history.

This bill will protect practitioners as they Sankofa important healing modalities. It will promote deeper skill by protecting access to culturally relevant education, locally. It will protect families and communities by preserving the village framework of mutual care known to be a necessity for strong mental and physical health of its members.

May mothers ever be empowered to advocate for themselves, may their voices supersede all others in elevating their interests. May this bill pass into law!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:06:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Kawasaki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Does not delineate the difference between a non-nurse midwife and a certified midwife APRN with prescriptive authority. Non-nurse midwives should not be able to prescribe medications or controlled substances.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:15:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marina Diaz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Marina Diaz and I am a resident of Honolulu (96818). I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly*

harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Marina Diaz

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:16:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a retired Registered Nurse who has worked in Labor and Delivery, I support this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 6:46:12 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Kim	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose this bill as it allows untrained people to legally perform specialized complex procedures that risk significant harm to mom and baby that can lead to death.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 8:14:18 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronnie Texeira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"Testimony in Opposition to HB 1328 – Relating to the Licensure of Midwives

As a OB GYN on Oahu, I strongly oppose HB 1326. This bill will lead to the continued harm to women and children who chose a home birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 8:26:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kainoa Toomata	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose HB1328. As a father, husband, Native Hawaiian and communtiy member I felt this bill will allow for the continued poor care during home births. These requirements do not meet any standards and are dangerous.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:52:49 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Kathy Shimata, and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly*

harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kathy Shimata

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 11:10:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabella Lau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of this bill. The medicalization and hospitalization of birth can never fully encompass the full range of birthing practices that are a part of traditional, generational and cultural lineages. It is a woman's and a mother's right to make informed decisions about who, what, when, and where she births, and this kind of empowered birth has been shown to have the best and safest outcomes for both babies and mothers. Supporting the ability for midwives to practice and give care to mothers does not mean hospitalized birth does not have its appropriate role when a birth outside of it is not safe -- I believe both can work together to provide the best care to mothers and babies, but we cannot pretend that a hospital birth is the only option and the most desirable one for all women. Supporting this bill means you are protecting the sanctity of birth for all wahine.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 11:18:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Ogata	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair Chun and members of the Committees on Health and Consumer Protection & Commerce:

I am in strong opposition of HB 1328. This legislation creates an unsafe system of care for our families on many different levels.

As a registered nurse with a Master's degree in Public Health/Maternal Child Health and a lifelong resident of Hawaii, I understand the importance of holistic education and training as it relates to caring for our families. Please keep our families safe from unregulated systems and potential cultural appropriation by opposing HB 1328.

To the Committee on Health & the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
By Margaret Ragen, CM, LM, MS

02.07.25

Re: HB 1328 RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Chair Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice-Chair Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Chair Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi,
and Vice-Chair Rep. Cory M. Chun,

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1328

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1328.

My name is Margaret Ragen. I speak to you today as a Certified Midwife (CM), a practicing licensed midwife and small business owner of a midwifery clinic on Hawai'i, a board member of the Hawai'i Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (HAA), a member of the ACNM Committee of Advocates for the CM (C-MAC), a member of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective (HIHBC), and member of the ACNM Oregon and New York Affiliates. I am honored that after a short time of working within a community of midwives in Hawai'i, I was invited to participate in a collective effort to address preservation of the DCCA Midwives Licensing Program with modification to address extensive limitations for the CM. HB 1328 is a testament to the value of collective effort to continue regulation of non-nurse midwives for the benefit of the public, informed by national standards and Hawai'i standards. HB 1328 is protective of reproductive, religious, and constitutional rights. As there are now two midwifery bills under review, I urge committee members to seek clarity on the specific draft language required for a replacement act.

I recognize Act 32 and HRS457j had at its primary purpose public interest. Regulation of non-nurse midwives legitimized the importance of midwifery care and family health. A replacement midwifery bill must preserve regulation of non-nurse midwives while rectifying limitations which impeded access to this care. Access is a complex issue. It must be available, acceptable, affordable with accommodation to local considerations and accountability for this care. There must also be a viable pathway to the providers of that care. It is up to legislators and their reflections of public testimony to determine what must be included in a replacement midwifery act. Regarding considerations of the credential of the CM in a future licensing program, I offer testimony.

As a CM and HAA Board member, I have volunteered time in a number of advocacy efforts and engaged in continued conversations regarding expansion of access to midwifery care, including the value of the CM for Hawai'i. Contacts include: 1) DCCA re: draft language for administrative rules, 2) Med-Quest re: credentialing for licensed midwives, 3) DOH re: revision of birth center regulations, and 4) the Legislative Auditor in hopes definition and scope of the CM will finally be clarified.

REGARDING THE REGULATION OF CMs:

I hope all who are here in committee have a clear understanding of the equivalence of a CM to a Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM). If you do not, I am available to speak to any questions. My familiarity is with ACNM Standards and APRN/CNMs language in Hawai'i Administrative Rules HAR 89-C. I am also familiar with how CMs work in other states. I support HB 1328 in its success in reflecting national standards for the CM and establishing equivalence with the APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care.

Today, I am the only licensed Certified Midwife (CM) in Hawai'i. I attribute this singularity to limitations in ACT 32/HRS457J. Though I have tried, due to restrictions in the statute and a lack of administrative rules under DCCA, I am not eligible to apply for a midwifery position in any hospital in the State, and there are no licensed birth centers. Only in private practice can I provide a version of full-scope care via well-woman, newborn and home birth services allowable by law, including childbirth education, lactation counseling, mental health support, and provision of legend drugs, and ordering of labs and diagnostics. I have also been authorized by Georgetown University to precept Nurse-Midwifery Students, one who has recently graduated. I have done this by establishing a private practice and clinic in partnership with a CPM on Hawai'i. All services are reimbursed by cash. I have not been able to obtain Medicaid credentialing as Med-Quest has said DCCA Interim Rules are required to verify scope.

By addressing restrictions in HRS457j, I anticipate I will not be the only Certified Midwife in Hawai'i. Continuation of regulation with modification will allow for CMs to work side-by-side with their CNM colleagues, as well as with CPMs and a multitude of other providers. To give an example of how it could be, in New York I was able to obtain employment as a staff midwife at a licensed birth center and worked at a hospital OB/GYN practice. In both locations, I was authorized to provide full-scope care, maintain full prescriptive privileges including for controlled substances and could serve all people seeking midwifery care being credentialed by Medicaid and all major insurance providers. This could be the practice environment for the CM in Hawai'i.

THE VALUE OF THE CM FOR HAWAI'I:

A CM can enter a MS Midwifery graduate program with a BA or BS in a field other than nursing. Graduation makes them eligible to sit for the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) exam, the same exam required for the CNM credential. In the 90s, the CM was established as a specialty pathway. It allows the student who knows they want to solely provide midwifery care to enter a MS program and not take up a seat in an RN program nor be burdened with maintaining two licenses when they only need one for their aims.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRESERVATION WITH MODIFICATION FOR THE CM:

To achieve continuation of a licensing program with modification is a complex task. To my understanding, as vetted by ACNM Government Affairs, HB 1328 addresses equivalence to the CNM as it:

- Preserves licensure for the CM based on ACNM Standards with equivalence in the provision of midwifery care to the APRN/CNM in Hawai'i
- Establishes new statute regarding regulation of the CM that clarifies it is for non-nurse midwives designated as a 'licensed midwives'
- Establishes a distinction between the CM and Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) both licensed under this chapter and designated 'licensed midwives'
- Establishes eligibility for insurance reimbursement for 'licensed midwifery' services including Medicaid
- Clarifies definitions for "Certified Midwife," "Licensed Midwives," "Midwifery," & "Practice of Certified Midwifery" to align with ACNM Standards and equivalent in the provision of midwifery care

- Addresses failures by the Director of DCCA to administer the Midwives Licensing Program by mandating: 1) review of the future Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force Report, and 2) adoption of rules
- Clarifies scope of 'licensed midwives' as regulated by this chapter
- Establishes scope of certified midwives to be in alignment with ACNM Standards and equivalent to the APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care
- Establishes authority to delegate tasks to unlicensed assist
- Establishes for the CM equivalent eligibility with the APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care for prescriptive authority including for controlled substances
- Protects exemptions of the CNM and/or any other eligible provider granted AMCB midwifery credential (e.g. Naturopath) from regulation enacted by the new chapter
- Maintains Peer Review, and Data collection requirements to be based on ACNM Practice Standards & reflect equivalence with APRN/CNM requirements
- Establish requirements of DCCA to maintain data annually on the Midwives Licensing Program made available to the public, including data on numbers & qualifications of licensed applicants and complaints including resolution status
- Establish community oversight. As the 2019 Hawai'i Home Birth Task Force Report was not integrated into the DCCA Midwives Advisory Committee (MAC) discussions on establishment of interim rules, and this act will become permanent a provision for community recommendations is needed. A proposed vehicle is to temporarily re-establish a subsequent task force whose report is to be reviewed by the Director of the DCCA and MAC prior to implementation of administrative rules

Attached is a document which reflects how HB 1328 addresses these aims.

IDENTIFIED NEEDS FOR AMENDMENTS:

As a second midwifery bill was recently introduced publicly during the 2025 Legislative session, in consultation with Representative Ichiyama, it was made clear that certain amendments would be valuable to HB 1328 in consideration of a replacement bill to HRS457j including definitions and designations for the CM in other statutes where health care providers are mentioned.

HB 1328 SECTION 3. 457J-A Definitions amended to include:

“Telehealth” refers to any health care delivery enhanced by telecommunication. It is defined by the Telehealth Resource Center as “a collection of means or networks for enhancing the health care, public health, and health education delivery and support using telecommunications technologies.”

(Reference included: ACNM POSITION STATEMENT USE OF TELEHEALTH IN MIDWIFERY (2022))

As well as, inclusion of language from HB 1194:

HB 1194 SECTION 1. 457J-D GLOBAL SIGNATURE AUTHORITY “Licensed midwives shall be authorized to sign, certify, or endorse all documents relating to health care provided for their clients within their scope of practice, including workers' compensation verification documents, temporary

disability insurance forms, verification and evaluation forms of the department of human services and department of education, verification and authorization forms of the department of health, and physical examination forms; provided that nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the scope of practice of licensed midwives.”

HB 1194 SECTION 3. Section 329-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended as follows:

1. By adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted and to read: ""Licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife" means a person licensed under chapter 457J who is registered under this chapter to administer or prescribe a controlled substance; provided that a licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife shall not be authorized to request, receive, or sign for professional controlled substance samples."

2. By amending the definition of "designated member of the health care team" to read: ""Designated member of the health care team" includes physician assistants, advanced practice registered nurses, licensed midwives practicing as certified midwives, and covering physicians who are authorized under state law to prescribe drugs."

3. By amending the definition of "practitioner" to include:

and

(3) A licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife licensed and registered under section 329-32 to prescribe and administer controlled substances in the course of professional practice in this State; and (4) A pharmacy, hospital, or other institution licensed, registered, or otherwise permitted to distribute, dispense, conduct research with respect to or to administer a controlled substance in the course of professional practice or research in this State."

HB 1194 SECTION 4. Section 453-51, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending the definition of "health professional" to read as follows: ""Health professional" means any of the following:

and

(3) A licensed midwife practicing as a certified midwife with prescriptive authority under chapter 457J and duly licensed in the State; or (4) For the purpose of dispensing antibiotic therapy under this section, a pharmacist who is licensed or otherwise authorized to engage in the practice of pharmacy under chapter 461."

Mahalo for your time and consideration of these comments. I am in full support of HB 1328 in its entirety. I appreciate the State-wide collective effort to obtain endorsement from the Counties of Hawai'i, Kauai, and Maui, as well as the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and engagement with midwifery organizations, midwives in private practice, midwives as healers, and stakeholders engaged with advocates of the families who seek midwifery, reproductive health, religious, and cultural services. I recommend committee members to consider the extent of local participation in the drafting of HB 1328 as well as engagement of consultation with national organizations to guide next steps in amendment to a midwifery bill that will address public interests and expand access to such greatly needed care.

Sincerely,

Margaret Ragen CM, LM, MS
Owner & Staff Midwife at 'Ōhi'a Midwifery & Wellness
Secretary of the Board, the Hawai'i Affiliate of ACNM
ohiamidwifery@gmail.com
ohiamidwifery.com

See attached comparative chart:

HB 1328 ADDRESSING PRESERVATION & INDICATIONS FOR MODIFICATION TO HRS457J:

Act 32 (2019) 457J (2020)	RESTRICTIONS	INDICATIONS FOR MODIFICATION	ADDRESSED IN HB 1328 (2025)
	<p>Act 32. SECTION 3(d) Chapter 457J (midwives) shall be repealed on June 30, 2025.</p>	<p>PRESERVE LICENSURE for CM based on ACNM Standards & HAR 89-C for APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care.</p>	<p>SECTION 1 <i>“Purpose: (1) Provide for the continued licensure of certified midwives and certified professional midwives by the department of commerce and consumer affairs;”</i></p>
<p>457J-1 Findings and purpose.</p>	<p>RESTRICTIONS: 1) Midwives’ scope is identified as only AP, IP, PP care; and 2) Lacks language which indicates this bill only applies to non-nurse midwives or ‘licensed midwives.’</p> <p><i>“457J-1 (1) Midwives offer maternity and newborn care from the antepartum period through the intrapartum period to the postpartum period;”</i></p>	<p>ESTABLISH: a statute for non-nurse midwives as ‘licensed midwives’</p>	<p><i>“SECTION 1. Purpose: (2) Identify the scope of practice for a licensed midwife, including the ability to provide independent midwifery services in hospitals, clinics, freestanding birthing facilities, community birthing settings, and the home;”</i></p> <p>See also: 1) Definitions: include “Certified Midwife,” “Licensed Midwives,” “Midwifery,” “Practice of Certified Midwifery;” and 2) Scope of Licensed Midwives & Scope of Certified Midwife</p>
	<p>LACKS: language regarding eligibility for insurance reimbursement for ‘licensed midwives’</p>	<p>ESTABLISH: the need for 1) eligibility for insurance reimbursement for ‘licensed midwives’ services; and 2) distinguishing ‘licensed midwives’ from other related services, e.g. lactation counselors & doulas.</p>	<p><i>“SECTION 1. Purpose: (3) Clarify that the services of licensed midwives are eligible for insurance reimbursement”</i></p>

<p>457J-1 Findings and purpose.</p>	<p>LACKS: 1) language to what standards these licensed midwives are held with a distinction between the CM and CPM credentials.</p> <p><i>“457J-1.(2) The improper practice of midwifery poses a significant risk of harm to the mother or newborn, and may result in death; (3) The regulation of the practice of midwifery is reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of mothers and their newborns.”</i></p>	<p>ESTABLISH: 1) clarify language for the “practice of midwifery” under this Act, 2) identify the two credentials of licensed midwives under this Act, and 3) the requirements for them to be licensed.</p>	<p>“SECTION 1. Purpose: (4) Prohibit persons from identifying as certified midwives or certified professional midwives, unless those persons are appropriately licensed”</p> <p>See also: Definitions of “Certified Midwife,” “Licensed Midwives,” “Midwifery,” “Practice of Certified Midwifery” below</p>
<p>457J-2 Definitions</p>	<p>RESTRICTIONS: “Midwifery” definition via</p> <p>“457J-2. Definitions. “Midwifery” means the provision of one or more of the following services: (1) Assessment, monitoring, and care during pregnancy, labor, childbirth, postpartum and interconception periods, and for newborns, including ordering and interpreting screenings and diagnostic tests, and carrying out appropriate emergency measures when necessary; (2) Supervising the conduct of labor and childbirth; and (3) Provision of advice and information regarding the progress of childbirth and care for newborns and infants.”</p>	<p>ESTABLISH: distinction of the CM from CPM.</p>	<p>“457J-A Definitions. “Midwifery” means the independent provision of care consistent with a midwife’s training, education, and experience.”</p>
<p>457J-2 Definitions</p>	<p>LACK: definition that clarifies differences in</p>	<p>ESTABLISH: Definitions for the CM based on ACNM</p>	<p>“SECTION 2. 457J-A Definitions.</p>

	practice between a CM & CPM	language.	<i>"Practice of certified midwifery" means midwifery as practiced by a CM and encompasses the independent provision of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period and care related to sexual and reproductive health, gynecology, family planning, and preconception. A CM may also provide primary care for a person from adolescence throughout the person's lifespan, as well as for a healthy newborn or infant during the newborn or infant's first twenty-eight days of life."</i>
457J-2 Definitions	LACK: definitions to clarify "practice of certified midwifery"	ESTABLISH: additional definitions for the "practice of certified midwifery" based on ACNM & AMCB Standards for the CM	SECTION 3. 457J-A <i>"American College of Nurse-Midwives"</i> <i>"Certified midwife"</i> <i>"Collaborate"</i> <i>"Expedited partner therapy"</i> <i>"Legend drug"</i> <i>"Licensed midwife"</i> <i>"Midwife preceptor"</i> NOT INCLUDED "Telehealth"
457J-4. Powers and duties of the director	FAILURE: DCCA Director was unable to 1) adopt rules, and 2) amend HRS457J to establish equivalence of the CM with the APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care as AG deemed it was not within the authority of the Director. <i>"457J-4. The director shall have the power and duties to: (2) Adopt, amend, or repeal rules pursuant to chapter 91 to carry out the purposes of</i>	ESTABLISH: requirements of within established authority to the Director to establish rules. Concern: Per AG ruling, DCCA Director could not implement scope in administrative rules not already established in the Act.	"SECTION 3. 457J-C <i>(2) Shall adopt, amend, or repeal rules pursuant to chapter 91 to carry out the purposes of this part"</i>

	<i>this chapter.”</i>		
457J-4. Powers and duties of the director (cont’d)	<p>FAILURE: DCCA Director to administer, coordinate, and enforce</p> <p><i>“457J-4. The director shall have the power and duties to: The director shall have the power and duties to: (3) Administer, coordinate, and enforce this chapter and rules adopted pursuant thereto”</i></p>	<p>ESTABLISH: requirements of within established authority to the Director to administer this chapter.</p>	<p>“SECTION 3. 457J-C <i>(3) Shall administer, coordinate, and enforce this part and any rules adopted pursuant to this part;</i> <i>(6) Shall appoint an advisory committee pursuant to section 457J-D to assist with the implementation of this part and any rules adopted pursuant to this part.”</i></p>
Scope of Practice not included in 457J	<p>LACK: beyond a definition of ‘midwifery,’ Scope of practice for the licensed midwife and CM is not described in HRS457j</p>	<p>ESTABLISH: Scope of practice for the CM based on ACNM standards, equivalent to the APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care reflective of HAR-89-C, specifically: establishing authority to diagnose, obtain prescriptive authority, to provide expedited partner therapy, to admit, manage, discharge from hospital, & to assist in surgery.</p>	<p>“457J-E Scope of practice; licensed midwife <i>(e) (2) Provide comprehensive initial and ongoing assessment, diagnosis, and treatment;</i> <i>(f) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a licensed certified midwife may, in addition to practicing within the scope of subsection (e):</i> <i>(1) Obtain prescriptive authority to independently prescribe medications, including controlled substances, medications for the treatment of a substance use disorder, and medications for expedited partner therapy;</i> <i>(2) Admit, manage, and discharge patients to or from a hospital or freestanding birthing facility;</i> <i>(3) Assist in surgery; provided that this paragraph shall apply only to certified nurse midwives”</i></p>
Authority to delegate tasks not included in 457J		<p>ESTABLISH: authority to delegate tasks to unlicensed assist</p>	<p>“SECTION 3. 457J-F Delegation of tasks.”</p>

<p>457J-11 Authority to purchase and administer certain legend drugs and devices</p>	<p>RESTRICTIONS: Limits CMs authority to that of a CPM with no option to apply for prescriptive authority or or DEA</p> <p>“457J-11. Authority to purchase and administer certain legend drugs and devices. (a) A midwife licensed under this chapter may purchase and administer non-controlled legend drugs and devices that are used in pregnancy, birth, postpartum care, newborn care, or resuscitation, and that are deemed integral to providing care to the public by the department. (b) Legend drugs authorized under subsection (a) are limited for: (1) Neonatal use to prophylactic ophthalmic medications, vitamin K, epinephrine for neonatal resuscitation per neonatal resuscitation guidelines, and oxygen; and (2) Maternal use to antibiotics for Group B Streptococcal antibiotic prophylaxis per guidelines adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, postpartum antihemorrhagics, Rho(D) immune globulin, epinephrine for anaphylactic reaction to an administered medication, intravenous fluids, amino amide local anesthetic, and oxygen. (c) Legend devices authorized under subsection (a) are limited to devices for: (1)</p>	<p>ESTABLISH PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY: for the CM based on HAR-89-C for the APRN/CNM in the provision of midwifery care including for controlled substances</p>	<p>“SECTION 3. 457J-G Prescriptive authority; certified midwives. (a) <i>The department may authorize a certified midwife to prescribe certain controlled substances or prescription drugs”</i></p>
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	Injection of medications; (2) The administration of intravenous fluids; (3) Adult and infant resuscitation; (4) Rupturing amniotic membranes; (5) Repairing vaginal tears; and (6) Postpartum hemorrhage.”		
457J-6 Exemptions		PROTECT: exemption of CNM from non-nurse midwifery regulations	“SECTION. 457J-J Exemptions. This part does not require a midwifery license if the person is a: (1) Certified nurse-midwife holding a valid license under chapter 457”
Reimbursement not included in 457J		ESTABLISH: eligibility of licensed midwives for insurance reimbursement	“SECTION 3. 457J-O <i>Reimbursement for licensed midwives. Any health benefit plan or health insurance reimbursement, including the medicaid program, shall provide coverage for services rendered by a licensed midwife if the services rendered are within the scope of practice for a certified midwife or certified professional midwife, without regard to the location where the services were provided.”</i>
Annual reporting from DCCA requirement not included in 457j		ESTABLISH: Requirements of DCCA to maintain data annually on the Midwives Licensing Program made available to the public	“SECTION 3. 457J-Q <i>Annual reporting requirement”</i>
ACT 32	FAILURE: The 2019 Hawai’i Home Birth Task Force Report was not integrated into development of amendments nor interim rules for the DCCA	ESTABLISH COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT: 1) As the 2019 Hawai’i Home Birth Task Force Report was not integrated into the Midwives Advisory Committee discussions on establishment	“SECTION 1. Purpose: (5) <i>Temporarily re-establish the home birth task force to provide additional recommendations on issues related to home births.”</i>

	<p>Midwives Program</p> <p><i>“PART II. SECTION 8:</i> <i>(h) The task force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2020.”</i></p>	<p>of interim rules, and 2) as this act will become permanent, a provision for community recommendations need to be protected.</p>	<p><i>“SECTION 4. (a) There is established a home birth task force, within the department of health for administrative purposes”</i></p>
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HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:40:06 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bliss Kaneshiro	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a practicing obstetrician-gynecologist, I strongly oppose HB 1328. Patients have the right to choose where they deliver their baby and who provides care to them. They also have the right to know and understand the training and qualifications of their healthcare provider. Our community deserves the care of trained, licensed midwives who understand pregnancy physiology and can identify conditions that require transport to a hospital for further care.

Testimony of
Cristina Holt
Hilo, Hawai'i

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Cristina Holt, and I am a resident of Hilo. I am testifying in strong support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

Reproductive justice includes the fundamental right to choose where, how, and with whom to give birth. Access to midwifery care is essential for ensuring safe, culturally responsive, and individualized maternal health care for all families in Hawai'i. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure while protecting Native Hawaiian and other cultural birthing practices, ensuring that traditional birth attendants are not criminalized.

This bill is critical for the following reasons:

- **Protects Reproductive Freedom:** The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees reproductive autonomy, which includes the right to choose birth attendants and settings that align with personal, cultural, and spiritual beliefs.
- **Expands Midwifery Access:** H.B. 1328 allows the nationally recognized Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) as a licensure pathway, ensuring that local student midwives can complete their training and serve their communities.
- **Preserves Cultural Practices:** Traditional Hawaiian and other cultural birth practices must be safeguarded to prevent the loss of generational knowledge. Kupuna practitioners must be able to pass down their wisdom to the next generations without fear of legal repercussions.
- **Addresses Healthcare Disparities:** Many families in rural areas and underserved communities lack access to hospital-based maternity care. Traditional and community midwives help fill this gap, offering safe, effective, and personalized care.
- **Ensures Safety Through Inclusion:** Restricting midwifery does not increase safety; rather, it forces care underground. Legal recognition and licensure provide pathways for midwives to work collaboratively with the medical system, improving outcomes for birthing people and infants.

- **Supports Medicaid Reimbursement:** Recognizing licensed midwives under Medicaid ensures that lower-income families have access to safe and affordable birthing options.
- **Respects Family Autonomy:** Criminalizing unlicensed birth attendants could result in family members—such as grandparents or hānai relatives—being penalized for attending births within their ‘ohana, despite no evidence that such practices endanger birthing people or newborns.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to support H.B. 1328. This bill upholds reproductive justice, advances healthcare equity, and protects the cultural and personal rights of Hawai‘i’s birthing families.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Cristina Holt

Nichole Field
Aiea, Hawaii

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia



Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scott Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Dear Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in **strong support of HB 1328**, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a mother of three children.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- **It comes from the community.** Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- **There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer.** It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- **The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care.** Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- **Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with.** If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- **Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected.** We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.

- **Cultural birth practices are a human right.** This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- **It protects families.** The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- **It protects reproductive choice.** The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- **Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed.** Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- **Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives,** which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- **Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs,** which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo
Nichole Field



HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:09:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiulani Cole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Ka’iulani Cole, and I am a resident of Haiku, Maui. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

I was born under the gentle guide of a midwife on the Big Island in the 70s, and I also birthed both of my daughters at home in 2011 and 2014.

The Hawai’i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai’i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience**
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience**
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure**
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections**
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization**
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization**

- **Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs**

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Ka'iulani Cole

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:27:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Shay Chan Hodges, and I am a resident of [TOWN]. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.*

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Shay Chan Hodges

Haiku, Maui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:49:45 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Morse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Leah Morse, and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly*

harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Leah Morse

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:23:26 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shandhini Raidoo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist and I have practiced in Hawaii since 2015. I know firsthand how devastating complications of attempted home birth can be when patients are accompanied by birth attendants who are not trained in recognizing complications. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill and protect Hawaii's families.

Mahalo,

Shandhini Raidoo, MD, MPH, FAOG

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:30:55 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Saarinen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Women's choices for birthing as written in HB1328! I had a homebirth 34 years ago here in Hawaii. My newly aquired understanding is that the other bill I may have accidently given my support for , HB1197, is the opposite of what I support & the hearing for both at the same time & the wording used is very confusing!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:34:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Casandra Simonson, MD	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Casandra Simonson MD FAAP, and I am a practicing Pediatrician in Maui. I am representing only myself and not on behalf of anyone else. I am testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during labor and delivery have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

Midwifery is a critical profession that requires knowledge in areas such as prenatal care, emergency response, complications during childbirth, and postnatal care. Without these essential skills, the likelihood of preventable harm increases. Licensure ensures that midwives meet minimum educational standards and are held accountable for their practice. These standards are not just bureaucratic hurdles—they are a safeguard for public health and safety.

Exempting individuals from licensure could lead to a situation where midwives lack the necessary education or experience to recognize and respond to complications, which can be life-threatening in a birth setting.

In addition, I would like to emphasize that this bill could have long-term consequences for the credibility and safety of the profession itself. The public’s trust in midwifery is closely tied to the understanding that licensed professionals adhere to rigorous standards. By allowing broad exemptions, we risk undermining that trust and jeopardizing the safety of those who seek midwifery care.

I urge the committee to prioritize the health and safety of all patients by maintaining strict licensure requirements for midwives. I respectfully ask you to reject this bill and ensure that midwifery care continues to be regulated by appropriate educational standards that protect the public.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Casandra Simonson MD FAAP

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:39:28 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitlynn Ebisutani	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Kaitlynn Ebisutani, an obstetrician-gynecologist who has dedicated my career to **improving maternal and newborn health outcomes**. I strongly oppose HB1328 because it allows individuals to obtain certification through the **Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP)**, an apprenticeship model that lacks the **standardized, evidence-based education** required of accredited programs. This weakens midwifery standards by:

1. Granting licensure to midwives without ensuring they have completed an **accredited** educational pathway.
2. Undermining maternal safety by creating a **loophole** for underqualified practitioners to enter the field.
3. Potentially increasing **adverse birth outcomes** by allowing non-standardized training models.

For the health and safety of Hawaii’s families, I urge you to vote against HB1328

Thank you for your time and commitment to maternal health.

Sincerely,
Kaitlynn Ebisutani, MD

Hawaii Pacific Health Medical Group, Department of OB/GYN

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

‘O Luna Porras ko‘u inoa. Noho au i Makiki. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
 - o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and wellbeing. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system. There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health. There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328** offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, and multiple community organizations. **Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai‘i.**

Mahalo for your consideration,
Luna

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:09:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tadia Rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Tadia Rice, and I am a resident of Kailua. I am testifying in support of HB1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. HB1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

1. Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
2. Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
3. Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
4. Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
5. Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
6. Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
7. Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. HB1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but HB1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support HB1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Tadia Rice

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 1:15:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of: Janell C.

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Greeting, Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank you,

Janell C.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:08:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Government should not dictate or regulate traditional healing. There are already laws in place, let the kūpuna councils regulate these practices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:13:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tenley Ueda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1328 I am voting to accept this House Bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:27:02 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolina Paulon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1328

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB1328, a crucial bill that expands access to midwifery care for women and families across Hawaii. This legislation is essential to ensuring that all birthing people, but especially those in rural and underserved areas have access to safe, culturally respectful, and community-centered maternity care.

HB1328 addresses several urgent needs in maternal health by:

1. **Expanding Access to Midwifery Care in Hawaii:** Hawaii faces critical maternal health disparities, particularly in rural areas where families often have no local maternity care. By expanding midwifery services, this bill ensures that more families can receive high-quality, evidence-based care close to home or at their home, reducing barriers to safe pregnancy and child birth.
2. **Aligning Licensure with National Standards:** By bringing midwifery licensure requirements in line with most other States, HB1328 ensures that traditional Hawaiian midwives can practice with the same recognition and professional standards as their counterparts nationwide.
3. **Protecting Cultural Practices:** Native Hawaiian practitioners who have long served their communities have the right of keeping providing excellent midwifery care to their community, the criminalization of these practitioners is an affront to Hawaiian culture. This bill safeguards traditional midwifery practices and honors the wisdom of cultural birthkeepers, ensuring that indigenous and holistic approaches to birth are not only preserved but respected within the healthcare system.
4. **Adding the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) Pathway:** The PEP pathway is a critical component of midwifery training, allowing experienced birth workers, especially those in marginalized and rural communities to become certified midwives. This pathway removes unnecessary barriers and fosters equity in midwifery education, ensuring that skilled and knowledgeable birth workers can serve their communities without being forced to leave the islands for training nor forced to pursue online high priced schools regardless of their years of experience serving their communities.

By passing HB1328, the Legislature has the opportunity to make meaningful change in the lives of countless families. Expanding midwifery care is not just about increasing birth options, it is about ensuring safer pregnancies, healthier births, and stronger communities. I urge you to support this bill and help create a future where every family in Hawaii has access to compassionate, culturally respectful, safe and accessible maternity care.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Carolina Paulon

Student Midwife at a MEAC accredited school

8086369406

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:58:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexa Helge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1328. It is vitally important that pregnant women have choice in who is present at their birth. Feeling safe and supported is of the utmost importance in labor progressing the way it is designed to. Having the people you are most comfortable with is a huge part of that.

During the 2024 legislative session, Hawaii expanded abortion access. Lawmakers stood outside for photo ops, claiming to be in support of women, while letting birth choices die in the legislative process. It is hypocritical to claim to advocate for women and reproductive justice with abortion and not advocate just as hard for birth choices.

Truly support the women you claim to and pass HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:17:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa W. Chong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments: As a resident and birthing person in Maui County, I strongly oppose HB 1328 and respectfully ask both committees to vote No. This measure does not align with national standards of midwifery care and offers no consumer protection.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:30:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I **strongly oppose** HB1328 and urge you to do the same. The PEP pathway (apprecnticeship model) is not the solution to safe midwife training and licensure. An accredited educational pathway is going to provide safer birth outcomes in Hawaii.

Thank you,

Angel Willey MD (Board Certified OBGYN Honolulu, HI)

Testimony of
Paul Garcia
Kailua, Oahu



Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in **strong support of HB 1328**, Relating to Midwifery. This bill establishes a comprehensive framework to ensure safe, culturally respectful, and accessible midwifery care throughout Hawaii—a framework that is essential to protect both individual rights and our community’s heritage.

As a proud Hawaii resident and father of three children born on this island, my life journey—from overcoming personal challenges as an only child from a broken home to serving 20 years in the military—has deepened my connection to our community and its traditions. Through extensive research, networking, and personal experience with home births, I have come to appreciate childbirth as an incredible, natural, and beautiful human experience. I believe that every person should have the right to choose how they experience childbirth, and that policies must empower rather than restrict these choices.

In my 20+ years of government service, I have seen firsthand that well-intentioned policies can sometimes produce unintended consequences. Suppressing non-compliant midwifery practices drives them underground, endangering those who depend on accessible, community-based care. HB 1328 recognizes this risk by calling for regulations that strike a balance—protecting both public safety and the cultural practices that are vital to our community. It is through this balanced, inclusive approach that we can preserve the natural birth experience and uphold the rights of all Hawaiians.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank you,
Paul Garcia

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:54:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Nies	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please give woman the right to choose how they wish to give birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:13:59 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Dew	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.**

As a mother, I had the privilege of experiencing a home birth with the support of a traditionally trained midwife. Having the ability to choose who was present during my birth was incredibly important. Birth is a deeply vulnerable experience, and without the right conditions, it can become traumatic.

As someone who has experienced medical trauma, I do not feel safe in hospital or clinical settings, which often lack trauma-informed care. The ability to choose how and with whom we give birth is essential to ensuring a safe, empowering, and culturally appropriate experience. **This bill is critical in protecting birthing autonomy and mitigating trauma for individuals and families.**

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became

student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.

- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo nui,

Sierra Dew

Testimony in Strong Support of HB1328 - Relating to Midwives

Hawaii State Legislature – Joint Hearing by House Committees on Health & House Consumer Protection and Commerce

Hearing Date: 2/10/25

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the esteemed Committee,

My name is Abby Simmons, and I am submitting testimony in **strong support of HB1328**, which ensures continued licensure for certified midwives and certified professional midwives while recognizing the essential role of traditional birth attendants in Hawai‘i.

Why HB1328 is Necessary

Hawai‘i faces a maternal healthcare crisis, particularly in rural and neighbor island communities where access to hospital-based maternity care is severely limited. This bill expands access to skilled midwifery care while also protecting the cultural birth practices that have been part of Hawaii’s traditions for generations.

1. Improves Access to Safe, Skilled Maternity Care

- Many communities, especially on neighbor islands, lack access to OB/GYN services, midwives, and birthing centers, forcing families to travel for care.
- Licensed midwives provide evidence-based, safe, and cost-effective care for pregnancy, birth, and postpartum recovery.
- Traditional birth attendants play a critical role in serving families who seek culturally informed birthing options.

2. Honors Native Hawaiian and Cultural Birth Practices

- The Hawaiian tradition of birth support (pale keiki, lola, samba san) and other Indigenous birthing customs are essential to community identity and well-being.
- Act 32 (2019) acknowledged the need to integrate these practices into state policy, but current licensing laws exclude many traditional practitioners.
- HB1328 protects these vital traditions while ensuring clear safety standards for all birth workers.

3. Ensures Fair Licensing Pathways for Local Practitioners

- Hawai‘i does not have an accredited midwifery education program, making it incredibly difficult for local midwives to meet national certification requirements.
- This bill ensures alternative pathways so that Hawai‘i residents can pursue midwifery careers without leaving the state.

4. Supports Maternal Health Equity

- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have some of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the U.S.
- Studies show that access to culturally competent care reduces birth complications and improves outcomes for mothers and babies.
- This bill removes unnecessary barriers to midwifery care while still ensuring safety and accountability.

5. Improves Emergency Preparedness and Hospital Collaboration

- When complications arise during home births, seamless hospital transfers are crucial for safety.
- HB1328 encourages collaboration between midwives and medical professionals, reducing risks for mothers and infants.

In conclusion:

HB1328 is a commonsense solution that maintains important safety regulations for licensed midwives while also ensuring that traditional birth attendants can continue serving their communities without fear of legal repercussions.

I urge the committee to pass HB1328 to ensure safe, accessible, and culturally appropriate birth care for all families in Hawai‘i. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Abby Simmons (she/her)

Hawai‘i Island resident

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:18:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Briana Puahala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB1328.

It is important that all women giving birth or receiving pregnancy care determine who, where, and how they want to experience it.

It is our God-given right to make choices about how we want to birth our keiki.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:35:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB 1328 which continues a licensing scheme for licensed certified midwives and licensed certified professional midwives, to be overseen by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Re-establishes the home birth task force to provide recommendations on issues related to home births. Dissolves the task force on 6/30/2026. Requires reports to the Legislature.

This bill protects cultural practices which to me is most essential. This is Hawaii where the people of this place have cultural practices and traditional paths for birth and that should be honored.

This bill will also add PEP locally accessible training apprenticeship & training for clinical midwives recognized in most states and expands care protects extended & hanai family allows open communication, training, expanded services in areas with no maternal health care access.

Who determines what is right for a woman's body during birth? It should be the woman giving birth and the people chosen to assist.

C. Burghardt

Kou Oahu

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:38:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
krystle ilar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:10:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Laufenberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need to support women and families in their choices to birth how they want to with who they want to. Cultural midwives have been helping women birth healthy babies around the world since the beginning of time and carry wisdom that is needed in birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:13:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Roberts	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill supports the safety and desires of the community as it is important to create legal pathways for women to have the right over their body to birth at home and have a trained midwife of their choice to go through the process and build relationship with them.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:19:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard McCartin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Richard McCartin and I am a practicing Ob/Gyn in Honolulu, Oahu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 20 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

It is unfair to our families to put them at risk of injury to themselves and their children by allowing untrained and under trained people to portray themselves as trained professionals and perform care during on of the most dangerous times in a woman's life I unfortunately, have seen injury and even death following care given by such under trained and unregulated people and the tolls on those families was heartbreaking and completely unavoidable.

I strongly urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

Thank you for considering to oppose this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Richard McCartin MD

OBGYN, Department of OBGYN, chief of Pali Momi Women's Health, Hawaii Pacific Health

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:23:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaela Henderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, and members of committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery. As a Native Hawaiian mother, I have greatly benefited from the care of cultural practitioners during pregnancy and birth.

During my first pregnancy, I had uprooted my family and partner from his one hānau due to a lack of hospitals with labor and delivery services within two hours of our home. At the time, I was not afraid to be in the care of a local midwife in place of a standard hospital. Instead, I feared for the repercussions of systems that could have punished either my family or my midwife under current regulations. No one should have to choose between staying in their homeland and a safe birth. Had there been safer pathways to access care from trusted community midwives, a safer birth and postpartum period would have followed.

I am one of a large and growing community of Native Hawaiian mothers who demand the right to birth on our terms, and in ways that maximize the health outcomes for mothers and babies. Our lived experiences, along with the expertise of lawyers, practitioners, and western-trained providers, have informed this bill. The success of our midwifery in Hawai‘i is evident in our thriving nation. We know the alarming statistics for maternal health outcomes for Native Hawaiians in western medicine. We also know the positive progress that we have made by allowing cultural practitioners and Hawai‘i-trained midwives to inform integrated birth care.

Native Hawaiian-trained cultural midwives hold the most extensive, specialized research in Native Hawaiian reproductive health. Their experience with our birth needs far precedes that of any western medical institution. In order for Native Hawaiian women to be protected and for families to thrive, our practitioners must practice. They must steer conversations around our health, inform policy, and be a valued component of medicine in Hawai‘i. Please support HB 1328.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jaela Henderson

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Ayanna Walden. I am a board-certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist (OBGYN) working for Kaiser Permanente at a clinic in Waipahu and at Kaiser Permanente Moanalua Medical Center where I deliver babies and perform surgeries. Prior to moving to Hawaii a little over 2 years ago, I was in private practice for 16 years in Los Angeles working out of Cedars Sinai Medical Center. I am submitting this testimony adamantly **OPPOSING HB1328**.

HB1328 allows individuals to obtain certification through the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP). PEP is an apprenticeship model that lacks the standardized, evidence-based education required of accredited programs. PEP grants licenses to midwives without ensuring they have an accredited educational pathway and creates a loophole that allows underqualified practitioners to enter the field, increasing the chance of adverse birth outcomes.

I trained with Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and have practiced with CNMs throughout my entire career. Certified Nurse Midwives go through training and licensing that meets national standards. Kaiser Permanent Hawaii has one of the best OBGYN-CNM collaborative programs that I have had the privilege to work, providing safe, evidence based high-quality maternity care.

Midwives should be trained through accredited programs just as all other healthcare professionals are required to. Well-trained midwives are valuable partners in maternity care. Ensuring standardized and accredited education is key to successful collaboration between midwives and physicians.

The PEP pathway lacks standardization and does not provide the level of clinical oversight necessary to ensure safe care. Allowing midwives to bypass formal, standardized education jeopardizes patient safety, weakens trust between patients and providers, and ultimately creates unnecessary risk to mothers and babies. Too often CNMs and OBGYNs see the poor outcomes of clinically incompetent birth attendants. There are already significant risks with pregnancy, labor and childbirth, but it is even more devastating knowing that an adverse outcome could have been avoided with a properly trained medical professional.

Midwives need to be fully prepared to manage both normal and emergency situations, work collaboratively with healthcare providers, and provide equitable, high-quality care to all birthing individuals. Evidence shows that well trained midwives reduce adverse birth outcomes.

We must not allow substandard training models as seen in alternative pathways like the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) bypass accreditation and oversight. We must protect moms and babies.

I strongly urge you to **vote AGAINST HB1328**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ayanna Walden MD FACOG

Physician, Obstetrics and Gynecology Department

Hawaii Permanente Medical Group

Kaiser Permanente, Waipio Medical Office

Kaiser Permanente Moanalua Medical Center

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:42:19 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Nishiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:45:38 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristl Woo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee & Committee on Health.

I am in support of bill, HB1328. This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

Mahalo for not taking away the options women and families have of how they would like to birth in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your service and support,

Kristl Woo/registered voter

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:50:38 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teagan Weeks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328 to protect my cultural practices and have the right to choose how I want to give birth to my children.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:54:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aimee Fung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. Government should not be limiting our choices for those who are giving birth. It is our right to make these choices, especially traditional and cultural practitioners.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:59:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariella Pelekai-Wai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support H.B. 1328 because it expands access to midwifery licensure and care, safeguards reproductive choice, and protects traditional and customary birthing practices as affirmed by the Hawaii Constitution.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:09:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marisa Pangilinan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery. I am a doula and have had the experience of both hospital and home births here in Hawaii.

This measure is very important to me, because: Cultural birth-practices are a right. I have had a homebirth and also a hospital birth. I felt empowered knowing my choice was mine to make. Women should be given that choice.

It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:09:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carol lee kamekona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of hb1328. Mothers should have a choice for how and who they would like to have deliver their babies. In our most rural areas access to a hospital is not the most convenient. In the most extreme of conditions, even a helicopter takes precious time when a Mother or her child are in need of immediate attention. I truly support the traditional practices of midwifery.

again I support hb1328 to the fullest.

mahalo!

carol lee kamekona

kahului, maui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:22:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laine Hamamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm in support of HB1328 because it protects birth choices in Hawaii for our future families. I'm a mother of four sons and each son had a unique, beautiful, supported, and safe birth story. I've had a midwife, doula, and birth support team members and each of my births whether it was in a hospital and/or in the safety of my own home. When in labor, I heavily relied on my birth team who were with my husband and I from as early as my second trimester, and who knew intimately what I wanted for my birth and baby. The level of care I received from my birth team in every labor and delivery was educated, excellent, and personal. It was also a very spiritual experience and was treated with the utmost respect. I know that supporting this bill HB1328 will allow my sons to have the freedom to chose a birthing model that best supports their future family's needs and wants. That is a Hawaii I want to live in, where babies are born in love, safety, and in freedom. Please support HB1328 so our keiki have the best support possible from centuries of wisdom, cutural and traditional practices, and expansive resources for the diversity that Hawaii holds.

Mahalo,

Laine Hamamura

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:25:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jolie Stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The government oversteps by restricting my choices regarding birth—whether my own, my daughter's, or anyone else's. Its role should be to protect the right of individuals who wish to birth in non-traditional ways or follow their cultural practices. Women must have the autonomy to choose their birth workers. Birth is an incredibly vulnerable experience, and if it would be considered inappropriate for someone to watch me undress for a shower without my consent, it is even more so when it comes to the sacred, intimate, and vulnerable act of giving birth. I should have the right to decide who is present during such a personal and significant moment. Please pass HB 1328 and protect my birth choices. I support HB 1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:35:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia J. Goto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:37:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Winternitz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Elizabeth Winternitz, and I am a resident of Kula, Maui. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly*

harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Elizabeth Winternitz

Testimony of
CRYSTELLE SHARCOT
MAUI COUNTY



Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha,

Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in **strong support of HB 1328**, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a certified full spectrum doula and student midwife, studying through the Indie Birth Midwifery School. I have the intention of learning midwifery through a traditional midwifery lens, by apprenticing with traditional midwives and learning from them- like how traditional midwifery has always been taught, learned, and shared- by mere presence and integration of the wisdoms of conception, labor, birth, and beyond. My father was born at home in the jungles of the Philippines, and my grandmother birthed all her seven children with a midwife in the Philippines. I desire to have these options available to me and my daughters, their families, and for the next seven generations; I desire for each person to birth in safety,

with their cultural practices honored and respected, and in support from any kind of maternal health professional that chooses to support these women and birthing people.

This measure is very important to me, because:

It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.

There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.

The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.

Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.

Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.

Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.

It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.

Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important

for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.

Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,
Crystelle Sharcot
Student Midwife and Certified Doula

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:47:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kara Wong Ramsey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a practicing physician in neonatology in the NICU, specializing in the care of sick newborn infants in Honolulu, Hawaii. I am testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families and infants, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 10 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of to mother/infant dyad had recognized it. I have seen firsthand the permanent complications of what happens to newborns when untrained/unlicensed midwives do not recognize or appropriately seek a higher level of care.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:01:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB1328 because it will allow for greater access to high quality women's healthcare and birthcare by the incredible midwives we have here in Hawai'i. A woman should be free to birth the way she and her partner choose! From my experience of birthing 4 children, midwifery care and home birth is BY FAR superior healthcare when appropriate, resulting in better outcomes for mental and physical health for mom and for a healthier baby. If we actually care about women, healthcare and healthy babies we MUST protect birth workers here in Hawai'i by SUPPORTING HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:02:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This Bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:07:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Warren Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This Bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:28:03 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandria Amey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Alexandria Amey of Paia, Maui.

Dear Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a current student of Nurse Midwifery at Georgetown University studying and living in Maui, Hawai'i. I have served the community of Maui as a labor and delivery RN at Maui Memorial and work as a hospice RN in Maui county. I am a mother and married to a Native Hawaiian. I have personally gone through the immense struggles of obtaining a degree in nurse midwifery and obtaining a CNM creditinal in Hawai'i. Also as a birthing person in Hawai'i, restrictive licensure limited my ability to choose who I wanted at my birth and discriminated against cultural practioners and midwives. I have witnessed as a registered nurse, birthing person, and birthworker the harms of restrictive licensure on maternal morbidity and mortality. Midwifery reduces maternal morbidity and mortality, as studied by the World Health Organization, and birthing people deserve the right to choose where and with whom they feel safe to give birth with.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to

take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.

- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo nui loa,

Alexandria Amey, RN, MS in Nurse Midwifery and WHNP

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:45:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Harmoni Akao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birth choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:52:03 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shara Chapek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:59:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evan Harrison	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a full scope obstetrician-gynecologist practicing on Oahu. I **strongly oppose HB1328** because it **severely compromises patient safety**, potentially leading to devastating and tragic outcomes for mothers and their babies.

With maternal morbidity and mortality on the rise (and **adverse outcomes disproportionately affecting Native Hawaiian communities**), we should be doing all that we can to ensure that midwives are held to rigorous **educational and training standards** to provide **safe and competent** maternity care. We must not allow for substandard training models that **bypass accreditation and oversight**, as seen in alternative pathways like the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP). A lack of uniform education puts **both mothers and babies at risk**. Additionally, HB1328 **undermines maternal safety** by creating a **loophole** for **underqualified** practitioners to enter the field.

I urge you to **vote against HB1328** to ensure that every licensed midwife in Hawaii is trained to the highest standards, ensuring **safer birth outcomes** for our families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Evan Harrison, MD, FACOG

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:03:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anastasia Flanagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

I have experienced both hospital and home birth myself and I strongly believe that it's very important to have a free choice of choosing the place where your baby is born and who is with you when your baby is born. This is the most important moment in your baby's life, the way the baby enters this world is going to affect the baby for the rest of their life. I witnessed myself what a tremendous difference is between home and hospital birth and how much it affects the baby.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:27:18 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB1328. I think maternal healthcare should be expanded and mothers and fathers should have access and the right to choose which and what kind of healthcare provider they would like for their births. As a mother to almost 3, I have valued my midwife, midwife assistant and doula beyond measure for all of my pregnancies and birth. I do know first hand that Western care is needed and useful, however, it should not be the only legal option for parents in Hawaii. Please vote to expand birth choices and protect me and my daughters basic human rights in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Emma

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:30:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosanna Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is the most comprehensive bill to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:33:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB1328. I think maternal healthcare should be expanded and mothers and fathers should have access and the right to choose which and what kind of healthcare provider they would like for their births. As a mother to almost 6 and grandmother to 7 I would like to see maternal and infant care expanded and protected in Hawaii. I do know first hand that Western care is needed and useful, however, it should not be the only legal option for parents in Hawaii. Please vote to expand birth choices and protect me and my daughters basic human rights in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Jill

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:53:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark R. Villarin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Dr. Mark Villarin, and I am a practicing Board-Certified OB/GYN in Honolulu, HI testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for more than 10 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Villarin, MD, FACOG

Assistant Professor

Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Women's Health

University of Hawai`i at Mānoa - John A. Burns School of Medicine

1319 Punahou St., Ste. 824, Honolulu, HI 96826

Cell (808) 345-4102

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:54:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Noelani Ahia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Noelani Ahia and I am a resident of Wailuku, Maui. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly*

harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Noelani Ahia, L.Ac., MSTOM

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:55:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Mossman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:56:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Clack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, please support this bill to expand midwifery care for birthing people in Hawaii to have their needs meet, protect cultural birthing practices, and have greater access to deeply needed care in Hawaii. This bill also adds a PEP wich further bolsters access to midwifery in Hawaii, benefitting our families and caregivers into the next generation.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:02:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Celestine Casserley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. I had the privilege of giving birth at home with a Hawaiian cultural practitioner present, even though I am not Hawaiian—my husband is. It was incredibly important to us to honor his culture in the birth of our son. The freedom to incorporate these cultural practices into such a significant life event is something I deeply value, and I cannot imagine being denied access to such meaningful care and traditions. In our community, we are committed to preserving and promoting Hawaiian culture and traditions. Denying access to practices like this would be denying a vital part of the culture that deserves to be celebrated and supported.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:04:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Juliana Mello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:12:00 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Greeting Chair Takayama , Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a home birth Mother having given birth in Oregon 24 years ago where Midwives have full capacity to practice. HB 1328 echoes the autonomy of states like this that truly support reproductive rights and body sovereignty. Home Birth parents should have access to choose the care that they seek for the well being of their family. Having full access to the broad scope of Midwifery options increases the safety outcomes for Maternal and Infant health. When I was 19 I attended an accredited Midwifery school. I found that the level of racism, bias, and exploitation was at baseline included in the books, the teachers, the social constructs, and the bodies being exploited for the Midwifery numbers one has to get. I never did finish Midwifery school as I learned I am not a Midwife. What I am is a person who knows that the longest standing heroes and change makers are Midwives and it began from the beginning of Humanity. Indigenous solutions to Indigenous physiology should be established equally as standard of care in all systems for a sustainable future. Support HB 1328

HB 1328 supports humanity and safe birth options that are culturally congruent, non biased, and working toward a thriving population where the Midwifery workforce and the calling can flourish. We see the Maternal health crisis and this is based on limited scope of care and dominating models of supremacist systems. Before 1920 there were thousands of Midwives in most states in the continent. These Midwives became criminals under laws such as Sheppard towner act, Act 32 and bills like HB 1194. These laws were never created for safety but for capital gains and control over the birthing population.

Cultural and Religious practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive. Birth is the foundation of society, which is why birth practitioners as the protector of the generations, have always been ‘controlled‘ in patriarchal societies. In Hawai‘i as part of Polynesia, the revitalization of birth as a sacred, normal, natural part of life, within Polynesia is crucial. The sheer fact that there are ZERO Kanaka Maoli Midwives that are legal to practice in a home birth setting should be very alarming to you as a leader in our state. We see extensive prenatal, birth, and postnatal protocols in Hawai‘i for birthing people. It is recorded Hawaiian’s were some of the most healthy brilliant people to ever live. There was community involvement in maternal care and large-scale collaborative care with master practitioners to keep the birthing people healthy and their families valued. HB 1328 understands this and aligns with the extensive systems of care that should be available honoring the framework of expertise. Clinical Midwifery should be regulated by the

systems in which it was born. Just as Traditional systems should be regulated by the systems which they were born and accountable to.

HB 1328 includes The PEP process allowing for community engaged people to gain wisdom and intersection of experience with on the job training. These community based Midwives support what they know is needed explicitly in the communities that they serve. The education model is a framework, community based health care is the solution! Generational wisdom has lasted far beyond education systems. The education and regulation systems have far too long failed society as we see in the Maternal Health crisis in this Country. The removal of the apprenticeship systems and enforcement of white supremacist regulations are the culprit of the current disparities. The PEP process protects the aspiring midwife from the incompetent education program and offers them the opportunity for action based learning. Midwives in the PEP pathways serve and care for the community in which they feel most compelled and welcomed to serve. These same Midwives will sit for the same exam as a school based Midwife and be certified with additional unique credentials which standard education programs do not offer. The PEP process is an essential pathway out of disenfranchisement that encourages focused work for the community by people in the community. Hawai'i must support Traditional Midwives and apprenticeship models to keep the bridge of Polynesia and other cultures' brilliance alive, while being welcomed to the table of birth professionals. The Maternal Health workforce can grow healthy solutions versus agency to perpetuate colonized problems. Midwifery is the protection of women's health and sovereignty at birth and are the experts in low risk Reproductive health care. I ask you support HB 1328

The current law criminalized many professionals that help to support birthing people. Within the grey areas it leaves room to harm practitioners' livelihood and the overall health of the birthing person and their baby. HB 1328 allows for true collaborative care with the birth person and the baby at the center of care. Lactation care providers, Doulas, Herbalists, Chiropractors, Naturopaths, Grandmothers, Acupuncturists, OBGYN, pediatricians, LCSW, and many more are part of the collaborative care teams with Midwives that should be accessible to birthing people to choose the care providers. Currently these professionals are in the grey area of being criminalized in the current law HRS 457J. HB1328 is written so clearly, carefully, and comprehensive with solutions for Midwifery care and collaborations. HB 1328 Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly. This bill provides access to essential health care companies the less the economic burdens so many families face when seeking 'alternative care teams'.

America is currently the most dangerous industrialized nation to give birth in and had the least amount of Midwives. These horrible statistics need to change and HB 1328 is working to support that change. Please pass this bill and let's move into a state of equilibrium and place the Maternal and Infant health care options at the top. Racism, Eugenics, Violence is the basis of Midwifery regulations and education that were established for erasure by Medical fields and racist laws. WE must see ourselves out of these harmful systems. Harm reduction resides in the people of the community serving and investing within their community. Education and regulations have far too long been set up to remove people and disenfranchise the workforce. If we are truly a nation that support trauma informed care and reproductive rights we must support HB 1328.

Please vote in support of HB 1328

Thank you for your time and considerations,
Pahnelopi McKenzie

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:12:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel L. Curnel Struempf, LM, CPM	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

As the first midwife licensed under 457J, a member of the Hawai'i Home Birth Taskforce, a member of the DCCA midwife committee, a member of the Hawai'i Home Birth Collective Elders Council, and a member of NARMs complaints and grievances committee, I am asking you to support this amazing bill! HB1328 will expand access to maternal healthcare and allow the Certified Midwives and Certified Professional Midwives the ability to practice to fullest extent of their education and training.

This bill expands educational opportunities for aspiring midwives. It provides regulation of all midwives by implementing the precedented exemption program that has been successful in Oregon state. It expands care by following Washington states precedent in allowing the CPM limited prescriptive rights so pregnant people can use their health insurance coverage to pay for necessary medications relating to pregnancy, family planning, and gynaecological care. It allows all qualified certified professional midwives the opportunity to seek a license. It allows body autonomy for all birthing people to birth where and with whomever they choose. It provides real protection for cultural and religious birth practices. It supports native Hawaiian birth workers.

Please support the licensed midwives by supporting HB1328!

Mahalo,

Rachel Curnel Struempf, LM, CPM

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:14:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelia Gonzalez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a mother that birthed 3 children at home.

I lived 3 hours from a hospital so having the support an access save my life as well as a safe birth for my children.

I felt the most safest and secured with the assistance of midwives.

The knowledge and safety was suburb.

Women need this support,we need this option to be able to be supprted by this bill HB1328 to be pased for our personal choices to be supported.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.

- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank you,

Amelia Gonzales

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:21:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meghan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the bill for midwives including cultural practices. A birthing person's right to choice of their practitioners, persons of support, and their birth journey, is their right. Please provide access for choice for all of the cultures that are present here in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Meghan Walles

Makawao, Maui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:23:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Io Taylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I had two children with natural birth and would like to support the natural birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:34:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
anna-marie l enomoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB1328 to expand the traditional cultural practices in all spaces, including midwifery and the individuals right to choose what is best for themselves and their 'ohana.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:42:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Harris	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sara Harris, and I am a practicing OBGYN in Waipahu, HI testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 11 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

Sincerely,

Sara Harris, MD

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:56:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I urge your support of HB 1328. Part of women's reproductive rights are the right to choose their own birth attendant. This bill would support women's choices by supporting practicing midwives and by establishing a task force to propose legislation which will further protect women's options. This is an important part of our reproductive life.

Thank you for voting to support HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:21:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pamela Gerega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & members,

I support HB1328. This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices. Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:28:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zoe Durant	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Zoe Durant. I am a 29 year old mom of two girls & I am in strong support of HB1328. This bill supports healthy and autonomous options for growing families. It supports cultural practices & allows closer care for families near to cities/in rural areas. Thanks for taking the time to read my statements.

**HOUSE JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION AND
COMMERCE
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025 AT 2:00PM**

SUPPORT: HB 1328 RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committees,

I write today as a mother of two, a birth educator, lactation counselor, doula, community birth support professional, teacher, and former state senator in **strong support of HB 1328. In fact, our entire family is in strong support of this measure.** This bill seeks to expand midwifery licensure and increase access to maternal and perinatal care, addressing critical gaps in our healthcare system and affirming the fundamental rights of birthing people to make informed decisions about their care.

I have had the privilege of experiencing both a hospital birth and a home water birth. My first child was born in a hospital, where I was incredibly grateful for the care the neonatal team provided and fortunate that I was able to advocate for myself in this institutional setting. My second child was born at home in water, attended by a midwife who respected my choices, trusted my body, and provided the personalized, trauma-informed, and culturally attuned care that every birthing person deserves. This contrast solidified my belief that birthing people must have access to a full spectrum of care options.

The current restrictive licensure law under HRS 457J limits midwifery care to those trained in U.S. continent-based, accredited programs, effectively criminalizing traditional, Indigenous, and other culturally relevant birth practices. This restriction disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander families, who already experience higher rates of maternal mortality and adverse birth outcomes due to systemic barriers and social determinants in healthcare. HB 1328 rectifies this by creating inclusive pathways to licensure, including recognizing the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) and bridge programs, which are widely accepted in 27 of 39 states and Washington, D.C.

Hawai'i has long championed reproductive rights, including the right to choose where and with whom to give birth. HB 1328 aligns with these values by ensuring that birthing people have real choices, free from government overreach and unnecessary medicalization. The current law contradicts Hawai'i's proud legacy of reproductive autonomy by restricting access to midwifery care and forcing families into systems that may not align with their cultural, spiritual, or personal needs.

Research shows that trauma-informed, culturally competent birth care leads to better health outcomes, particularly for communities that have been historically marginalized. HB 1328 recognizes the importance of traditional birth attendants, Indigenous practices, and community-based care models, ensuring that midwifery remains accessible to all who need it. By incorporating culturally appropriate pathways to licensure, this bill not only protects reproductive rights but actively supports maternal and infant health in Hawai'i.

Furthermore, the language in this bill is essential for ensuring resilience in emergencies and improving access to maternal healthcare in rural and remote areas. Natural disasters, medical system strain, and transportation challenges disproportionately impact birthing people in these areas. Expanding access to midwifery care increases the availability of skilled birth professionals who can provide essential services when hospital access is limited. This is crucial in times of crisis, when continuity of care can mean the difference between life and death. Additionally, many families in rural communities may not have reliable transportation or the financial resources to seek care in urban hospital settings. HB 1328 addresses these disparities by creating equitable access to birth support, ensuring that all families—regardless of geography—can receive the care they need.

HB 1328 is a necessary step toward a more just, equitable, and inclusive healthcare system. I urge you to pass this bill and affirm the rights of all birthing people in Hawai'i to receive the care they choose, in the setting that best supports their needs. My body, my choice—let us ensure this fundamental principle extends to birth.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Thank you for your service.

Laura Acasio, Hilo

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:08:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Floyd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Women have already been denied the right to do as they wish with their bodies in regards to pro-choice. Now you are telling us exactly how and who can seek for medical care? I support this bill because it gives us a choice. It gives us a right to seek advice and medical care from whomever we see fit, not the western world.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:23:10 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alina Akbasheva	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Alina. I am a mother of 3 beautiful children. All of them were born at home with the help of the traditional midwives. I'm grateful to have had the options to choose how, where, and with whom to give birth. I would like if every woman could have these choices too. Let's preserve the traditional midwifery and make it available in Hawaii!

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1328!!!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:25:56 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori kimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair and Representatives,

I am in strong support of HB1328. Thank you for your careful consideration of this bill. It has been created with clarity and purpose and serves the community in many vital ways. The other midwifery bill you will hear today HB1194, although I am sure was also crafted with good intent, is unclear and dangerously written concerning cultural practitioners and a midwife's purpose in our community in general. Please read these bills carefully as you make your decisions on moving forward.

Mahalo, please move HB1328 forward.

Dr. Lori Kimata

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:27:45 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Shields	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Ryan Yoshimura Shields, and I am a board-certified obstetrician-gynecologist practicing in Kamuela. **I am submitting this testimony strongly opposing HB1328** which would allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives.

I work closely alongside well-trained midwives in our hospital, but I have also seen firsthand the complications that arise when the person taking care of a birthing person fails to recognize the severity of a situation.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during labor and delivery have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training.

I am deeply committed to providing safe and holistic care during each individual's labor and delivery journey and I urge the committee to prioritize the health and safety of all patients. I respectfully ask you to reject this bill and ensure that midwifery care continues to be regulated by appropriate educational standards.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryan Shields, MD
Department Chief, Obstetrics and Gynecology
Queen's North Hawai'i Community Hospital

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:37:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Welch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:29:28 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Ziegler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB1328

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support HB1328, which is vital for expanding midwifery care across Hawaii, particularly in underserved areas. This bill addresses key issues:

1. ****Improves Access:**** It ensures rural families receive quality, culturally sensitive maternity care at home or nearby.
2. ****Standardizes Licensure:**** Aligns Hawaii's midwifery licensure with national standards, recognizing traditional Hawaiian midwifery.
3. ****Preserves Culture:**** Protects Native Hawaiian birth practices, preventing criminalization and respecting cultural wisdom.
4. ****Introduces PEP Pathway:**** Offers experienced birth workers a certification route without leaving Hawaii or facing costly education, promoting equity.

By supporting HB1328, we can enhance maternal health outcomes, respect cultural practices, and ensure equitable access to care. I urge you to vote 'Yes' for safer, healthier communities.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:48:57 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manuela Arango	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Manu, and I am a birthworker deeply committed to supporting families through the sacred journey of childbirth. I am writing in strong support of HB 1328, a bill that acknowledges the autonomy and rights of individuals to birth on their own terms. As a birthworker, I have had the honor of witnessing the profound power that comes from allowing individuals to choose how and where they bring their babies into the world.

For centuries, our Hawaiian ancestors practiced sacred birthing traditions rooted in deep spiritual reverence and respect for the birthing process. Ancient Hawaiian birthing practices were not just about the physical act of birth—they were about the spiritual connection between the mother, the baby, the land, and the elements. It was a deeply sacred time, full of healing, strength, and connection. These practices were passed down through generations and were guided by intuition, connection to ‘āina (land), and the support of loved ones. The ability to honor these spiritual and cultural traditions is essential to the health and well-being of our families and communities today.

The right to birth in a way that aligns with one’s cultural beliefs, values, and spiritual practices is vital for the well-being of our people. Having the freedom to choose one’s birth environment—whether at home, in a birthing center, or in a hospital—empowers parents and restores a sense of control in a moment that has historically been dominated by others. This freedom allows individuals to find strength and confidence within themselves, drawing from their ancestral wisdom and personal power.

Throughout my work, I have witnessed firsthand the immense gratitude from mothers who, through having the freedom to choose their birth plan, find an empowering connection to their bodies, their babies, and the circle of support around them. Many express deep appreciation for being able to trust their instincts and make decisions that honor their own experiences and desires. The healing that comes from reclaiming the birth process as something personal, sacred, and liberating cannot be overstated.

Birthing is something humanity has done since the beginning of time. It is as ancient as life itself. Every birth is a unique, sacred experience, and the ability to honor each person’s choice in how they birth is an act of respect and recognition of their inherent strength and wisdom. I urge

you to support HB1328 to ensure that individuals are empowered to birth in a way that is aligned with their values, traditions, and well-being.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mahalo nui loa.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:15:43 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a mother of 2 children born at home under the complete care of a midwife.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.

- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

Thank you very much.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:35:06 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ligia Barnett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please allow midwives to practice and allow them to

fully do what they are trained to do completely and fully without push back. They are trained professionals and it should be the birthing mothers decision.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:09:49 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
dawn alba noble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protects cultural practices

adds PEP

expands care

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:29:18 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Nagamine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Kimberly Nagamine, and I am a practicing OB/GYN in Honolulu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I did my residency training in Hawaii for 4 years and have practiced in Hawaii for 7 years, and I have seen firsthand the devastating complications that could have been prevented if the provider taking care of the patient had recognized what was going on.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. What I have often seen in my clinical practice is that birth practitioners in the community do not disclose the amount of training they have or the potential risks to mother and baby of an out-of-hospital birth. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:48:50 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB 1328 and pregnant people's rights to choose our own birth journeys. Especially with the lack of access to OBGYNs and lesser quality of care we have been getting from "western medicine" lately, we need the midwife option as a choice for giving birth as well as pre & post natal care.

I gave birth in 2022 and I can say first hand that the OB system in Maui is heavily strained - and that was before critical OBs closed their offices and before the midwifery ban. I was appalled when the state allowed for the legality of midwife care to expire and it's past time to make this right.

Support birth workers, midwives, cultural practitioners, and pregnant people's rights by supporting HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:12:37 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexis Muller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and committee members,

I am writing to stand in **strong support of HB1328**. I write in support as a women and mother to allow women to choose where and with whom she gives birth. It is a women' choice whom she allows to see over her care when she is giving birth.

Mahalo for your time and consideration

Alexis Muller

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:17:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lilinoe Steiner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB1328, as a Kanaka maoli born and raised on my family land and a student studying to become a midwife, I want to stand firm that I will represent my community, my family, my kanaka in standing firm for expanding care for our residence, for our children. Care and support that we not only need to happen immediately, but also to set in place to be available for the future generation. E ola mau ka hā o ka 'āina hānau, e malama i nā loina o ke kanaka, kokua kekahi i kekahi. Hā is the breath of life, wai is water wai is also life and in all living things, ʻi is our highest source of our highest connection to oneness. Hawaii is a place where we practice respect, community, honesty, all for the safety and responsibility to our people to our land to our culture to uphold the true meaning of Aloha. I support HB1328 to continue to provide expanding care and education for our Kanaka.

me ke aloha a me ka mahalo,

Lilinoe L. Pe'a Atkinson (LMT)

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:25:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jenica springer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT HB1328 - This bill protects traditional

Hawaiian midwives, protects birth assistants, and keeps the PEP pathway for midwifery certification open— making midwifery more accessible to birth workers in Hawaii and therefore home births more accessible for families in our community.

Please support people's choice, and comfort.
sincerely, Jen Springer

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Hannah Gill, and I am a resident of Trafalgar, IN. I am a childbirth educator, doula, VBAC mom, and advocate for birth and birth choice. I am testifying in **support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Hannah Gill

Additional Resources and Guidance:

[Midwifery Factsheet](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (Ea Hānau)

[Recording of our Legislative Advocacy 101 Training](#) (45 mins)

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:46:08 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meghan Meyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Meghan Meyer

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is [NA], and I am a resident of [TOWN]. I am testifying in **support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kāua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

[NAME]

Additional Resources and Guidance:

[Midwifery Factsheet](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (Ea Hānau)

[Recording of our Legislative Advocacy 101 Training](#) (45 mins)

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is [NAME], and I am a resident of [TOWN]. I am testifying in **support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

[NAME]

Additional Resources and Guidance:

[Midwifery Factsheet](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (Ea Hānau)

[Recording of our Legislative Advocacy 101 Training](#) (45 mins)

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:53:35 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sally Markee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sally Markee, and I am a practicing OB/GYN in Honolulu, HI testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during labor and delivery have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

Midwifery is a critical profession that requires knowledge in areas such as prenatal care, emergency response, complications during childbirth, and postnatal care. Without these essential skills, the likelihood of preventable harm increases. Licensure ensures that midwives meet minimum educational standards and are held accountable for their practice. These standards are not just bureaucratic hurdles—they are a safeguard for public health and safety.

Exempting individuals from licensure could lead to a situation where midwives lack the necessary education or experience to recognize and respond to complications, which can be life-threatening in a birth setting.

In addition, I would like to emphasize that this bill could have long-term consequences for the credibility and safety of the profession itself. The public’s trust in midwifery is closely tied to the understanding that licensed professionals adhere to rigorous standards. By allowing broad exemptions, we risk undermining that trust and jeopardizing the safety of those who seek midwifery care.

I urge the committee to prioritize the health and safety of all patients by maintaining strict licensure requirements for midwives. I respectfully ask you to reject this bill and ensure that midwifery care continues to be regulated by appropriate educational standards that protect the public.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sally Markee, MD

OB/GYN

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:59:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison M McFee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:02:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
April Bailey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I ask you to please support this bill, hb1328, before you . Our community needs more grass roots actions and nothing is more elemental and important than a birthing person's right to choose an appropriate caregiver. There is not a one size fits all in birthing. We must choose to honor our right to be treated in a compassionate and loving format for all families .

Corporate America must not be allowed to entangle the very fabric of our being . Choice and the right to choose is on our table right now and we must embrace and hold on to our rights dearly if we will survive as a diverse species.

please support this bill.

with Aloha

April Bailey

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:03:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Roxburgh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:07:36 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protects the freedom of cultural practices

-Religious freedom is a constitutionally protected right. Removing the freedom to choose midwifery during your own birth is a clear violation of the constitution. The Amish and Mennonite communities are recognized and respected in their cultural practices around the US, so why not other that choose to give birth in the way that their god intends.

expands care on our already limited care medical system

-Our medical system is the one of the worst in the nation and in many cases are not prepared for safe births. Requiring women to give birth in an unsafe environment without choice is the furthest thing that the state could do for the safety and wellbeing of pregnant women.

-Though MEAC, 0 kanaka maoli have been licensed or eligible showing that there are little to no licensed midwives in the state that can meet the religious requirements for home births currently for many women.

-PEP is recognized by 27 states and DC.

Statistically improves birth outcomes

-There is no evidence that licensure improves safety or outcome.

-There is strong statistical evidence that cultural birthing practices in INCREASE the safety for mother and child. Increasing midwifery interventions could avert 41% of maternal deaths as well as 39% of neonatal deals and 26% of stillbirths according to the Center of Reproductive Rights.

-There is a risk of 0 for cultural home birth because there is no evidence of any harm with these practices.

-"Women in the planned home-birth group were significantly less likely than those who planned a midwife-attended hospital birth to have obstetric interventions" NIH study PMC2742137

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:07:43 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Schattenburg-Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. This bill is the most comprehensive way to support birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:12:14 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill which broadens the accessibility of midwifery services in Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:12:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Audrey Alvarez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Audrey Alvarez

Honolulu, Hawaii by way of Lahaina, Hawaii

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a community member and mother of three (3) healthy and strong children that were all born at home under the care of a highly skilled, traditional midwife.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ohana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ohana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native

Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank you,

Audrey Alvarez

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:17:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices. Please support this bill to protect our mothers and children. we need to allow our families the choices & honor the decisions that families make for what is best for them.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:23:36 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:26:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaniloa Kamaunu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to whom this testimony may concern,

In 1897 the US Congress accepted the wishes of Kanaka Maoli subjects of Ko Hawaii Pae not wanting a treaty of Annexation with the US or become it's citizens. Congress agreed and accepted the Ku'e Petition keeping us sovereign. 1959 Territory of Hawaii admissions SubSection 19 states that this act does not convey US Nationalty nor restore or take away . 1993 Public Law 103-150 The Apology bill whereas 29 that we didn't give up anything. 1978 Hawaii State Constitution Article 12 Section 7 states the The State of Hawaii government would uphold customary and traditional practices. Wiith the use of midwives being a custom and traditional practice the State of Hawaii is obligated to protect this right of use of the midwives to exist and perform their services.

With Doctor's services being scarce and many of them leaving the islands more so is midwives are needed. With many people not being able to afford medical insurance the services of the midwives are a necessity especially to young mothers.

Please as the governmental law makers please support HB1328.

Mahalo Nui

Kaniloa Kamaunu ¹

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:43:36 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paahana Kincaid	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Welina mai chair members,

I write today to SUPPORT HB 1328, relating to midwifery.

As a native Hawaiian wahine and mother of 8 keiki, who is a stong advocate of homebirth and birthing rights and practices ingeneral, I support HB1328.

Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important to me and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive. Cultural birth practices are a human right.

The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.

Mahalo,

Paahana Kincaid

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:43:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stanley Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. It is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:47:27 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Babatunji Heath	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:53:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiulani Bowers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this as it is expansive and inclusive, it supports our cultural practitioners and community

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:54:33 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Merrily Daly	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Merrily Daly, I have been an RN since 1976, a CPM since 1995 and an LM since 2019.

I oppose HB1328

1. Anyone could say they are a midwife and practice without any training. Cultural practitioners from all over the world could come here with their version of their cultural practices and apply them to whoever came to them with no accountability if something should happen.

2. I am not against cultural practices and I believe a woman has the right to choose whoever she wants to birth her baby. It can even be someone who is not trained, however if that person says she is a midwife (which states a particular definition) and she is charging that person and does not know them, then I am against that.

To end with: Would you get on an airplane with a person who stated they were a pilot yet was exempt from acquiring a license to fly?

Thank you for your consideration and hearing my testimony

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:54:41 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Estephany sedas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning

i want to submit my testimony. I would not have my 2 wonderful babies if not for the blessing of being here in Hawaii. The Mana that extends through his people and their land. My midwives who walk with me in this journey is the very representation of Aloha and Mana. I am grateful to be able to experience motherhood in a natural way. I had less intervention and stress when I was with my midwives than in the hospital. My experience and the one of my children was enhanced and blessed by these women. They listen to my body, allowed me to flow naturally and not forced to be confined or rushed to give birth.

I am better for this and I support our midwives.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:57:33 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maeha Bush	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:00:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this Bill that expands access to birth care, allowing families to have unrestricted birth choices and greater maternal and infant care. I urge all members of the Committee to **VOTE YES** on this Bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:07:08 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Galushkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:11:25 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darby Partner CPM LDM	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I am a licensed midwife in Kona, Hawaii. I've been serving families as a Homebirth midwife here since 2013. I support this bill. Midwives provide individualized, comprehensive care to women with healthy normal pregnancies and births with excellent results. We are very valuable to our communities. Supporting us supports better birth outcomes for our communities.

Mahalo Nui,

Darby Partner CPM LM

Hawaii Holistic Midwifery

KEALAKEKUA BAY HAWAII

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:16:21 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Galushkin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:20:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Kaleiohi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother of four children born at home in Hawaii, I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:22:09 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clayton Timmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:24:08 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:31:26 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia OLeary	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Nearly a year ago, I gave birth to my daughter in the comfort of my home. Throughout my pregnancy, I received typical prenatal care through an OBGYN as well as care from my midwife at home.

I have, first hand, witnessed and experienced the drastic difference between midwifery and obgyn care. I wholeheartedly believe that it is in the best interest of all women for both of these practices to be protected in tandem. One cannot exist without the other and both are necessary! I would not have had a natural birth if I was at the hospital as my daughter presented hand first and I was screaming for pain relief. My birth team talked me off of every ledge and helped me to realize my true strength as a woman. Hours after I gave birth, I needed to receive emergency medical care as I was hemorrhaging. After an ambulance ride and the worst four hours of my life in the hospital, I was back at home with my baby. I am very grateful that I was able to receive emergency medical care but I would not choose to give birth in the hospital even if I knew that was going to happen. Because of all of the craziness with these laws surrounding midwifery care, I did not feel comfortable disclosing to my obgyn that I was planning on a home birth. I was chastised at the hospital for my choices. A nurse spent hours telling me how I jeopardized my life and my child's. I could write a book on how alone, scared, stupid, and violated that the hospital staff made me feel. All I will say is that my midwife has only ever made me feel empowered while my doctors made me feel that I must depend on them to deliver my child rather than doing it myself. Needless to say, if it weren't for the care I received at the hospital I may not be here with my almost one year old. I am grateful for that emergency care but, hospitals can absolutely learn a thing or two from the peaceful and nurturing environment that midwife's offer. The current laws surrounding midwifery care are furthering the divide between traditional cultural medicine and western advanced science when what we need to do is bring the two together.

Every woman should make the decision for herself as to which type of care she would like to receive.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:32:35 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joli Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT BILL HB1328

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:36:24 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Manayan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

My name is Olivia Manayan, and I am a practicing OB/GYN in Honolulu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328, which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 5 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it. While proponents of this bill insist that this bill will not increase risks associated with birthing, I can tell you firsthand that this is simply untrue. I have personally seen the negative health outcomes that can arise when a birthing attendant who is not trained in the management of labor and delivery acts outside of their scope and does not come to the hospital when it is indicated.

As someone who was born and raised in Hawai`i, as well as someone who hails from a multi-cultural background, I have a deep respect for cultural practices and know how important they can be to a person's birthing experience. I do not believe that opposing this bill is in conflict with that respect or with the support of cultural birthing practices. Rather, by opposing this bill I aim to support upholding the highest standards of care for the profession of midwifery. If patients opt to have a midwife present at their birth, in the same way that they opt to have a doctor or a nurse present, they should be able to trust that they have chosen someone who is highly skilled and trained in the management of normal and abnormal labor and delivery.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

Sincerely,

Olivia Manayan, MD MPH
Obstetrics and Gynecology
The Queen's Medical Center

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:37:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support HB 1328. I am a licensed midwife on the Big Island of Hawaii. I was born and raised here and am honored to be living home again working as a community midwife. I see the deep value in allowing women to choose what they want and who they want at thier birth. I work with woman of all cultural backgrounds and see the importance of allowing woman to choose cultural practitioners to accompany them through their processes of motherhood. Please consider this bill. It will deeply effect the women and families of Hawaii.

Mahalo Nui Loa

Uala Lenta. L.M.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:40:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandi Timmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:43:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sarah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, I am writing in support of HB1328

While I am in support of all aspects of this bill, I will speak to the two most important issues for me.

I am a long time resident of Kaua'i. I gave birth to two children on the island, one of whom was born at home with a midwife that I hired privately from California. My second child was born at home with zero providers present. I chose to give birth unassisted because of the lack of midwives available in my community. This was plenty years ago, but the issue persists.

I decided to become a part of the solution, so I decided to go to midwifery school. Hawai'i was discussing licensing midwives and the rumor was that only MEAC educated midwives would be eligible for licensure.

I decided to leave the island to attend MEAC school so that I could achieve my dream of being a midwife and being a resource to the Kaua'i community. Unfortunately, my decision to move my family off the island temporarily has become permanent. The cost of training, lost wages from my business in Hawai'i, and the rise in housing costs has prevented me from returning. If I did not have to leave Hawai'i for MEAC training, I would likely still live there and providing the invaluable services of maternity health to my beloved community.

Three generations of my family have called this island home, but now that is lost because the PEP process was not available.

The PEP process is rigorous and produces great midwives. Most importantly, it makes midwifery education accessible to local and native Hawaiian residents.

Please pass this bill to make the PEP process available.

Additionally, this bill addresses the need to allow CPMs limited prescriptive authority for common obstetrical needs such as contraception and certain infections. This is allowed in states like Washington and Texas and it improves health outcomes by preserving continuity of care and early intervention. It removes the need for referral which can delay treatment. Allowing CPMs to dispense these medications will have positive impacts especially for our more rural communities.

Please pass this bill. Make midwifery education accessible to local residents and allow midwives to practice according to their training and scope of practice!

Thank you for considering my testimony.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:45:35 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ricardo Molero Bravo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1328. Midwifery care plays a vital role in maternal and infant health, but **removing or lowering licensure requirements** puts families at risk. The **Hawai'i State Auditor's report** has emphasized the importance of regulation to ensure safety, competency, and accountability among midwives. Without licensure, families may unknowingly receive care from individuals **who lack standardized training and oversight**.

Every pregnant person deserves **informed choice and safe options**, which is only possible when midwives meet recognized educational and professional standards. I urge you to **prioritize maternal and infant safety** by rejecting HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ricardo A. Molero Bravo, MD

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:48:30 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jess Chirico	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:49:23 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
betsy neaves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother, grandmother, and retired nurse I strongly urge you to support HB1328.

I have birthed one child at home with the attentive support of a lay midwife. My 3 grandchildren were born at home with a midwife in attendance who gave full prenatal, birthing, and postnatal education and support. The knowledge,compassionate care, and experience of this midwife created a safe and positive outcome for all 3 births.

Please do your part to create safety for all families who choose home births by supporting HB1328.

Aloha,

Betsy Neaves

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:49:38 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelia Ensign	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:50:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andria DeBina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328 because it protects cultural practices, it exempts practitioners and adds PEP, it allows locally accessible training apprenticeship & training for clinical midwives recognized in most states it will expand care and it protects extended & hanai family which allows open communication, training, expanded services in areas with no maternal health care access. I strongly support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:51:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
rebecca	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, protects birth assistants, and keeps the PEP pathway for midwifery certification open—making midwifery more accessible to birth workers in Hawai‘i and therefore home births more accessible for families in our community.

mahalo ,

Rebecca Cameron

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:51:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wai'ala Ahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Wai'ala, a native Hawaiian, a homebirth mother, a cultural practitioner and a resident of my my ancestral homeland of Hawai'i nui. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.

1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, and multiple community organizations.

Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai‘i.
Mahalo for your consideration,

Wai‘ala

Additional Resources and Guidance:

Midwifery Factsheet (ACLU of Hawai‘i)

Midwifery Bills Comparison Table (ACLU of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Homebirth

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:52:59 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melania Timmer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:53:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Haug	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:01:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bonnie Marsh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill as a retired midwife and active Naturopathic Physician on Maui.

This bill speaks to a Womens right to chose a midwife that they feel will be safe and give them excellent care through their pregnancy and birth.

I support an apprenticeship and certification process for all forms of midwifery practice.

By acknowledging midwives for their education and practice helps to prevents families from free birthing. Insurance reimbursement and acknowledgement of home births needs to follow to help all the families who chose midwives can be supported financially.

Mahalo for this bill to support midwives and the families they serve.

Dr. Bonnie Marsh, ND

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:01:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meg Ganser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in support for HB1328, and for the protection of midwives and indigenous birth practices and practitioners, now and in perpetuity. Our right as men and women to choose how, where, and with whom we will bring new persons into this world is a basic human right. We stand for the preservation of our generational link to nature and our own choice.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:10:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Symantha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My birth was natural with doctors only involved in the first three months of pregnancy. I stopped going to a regular obgyn because I would waste two hours waiting to be seen for five minutes and then leave. My partner wouldnt be able to come for all those appointments just to leave as we are seen. I did not need any medical interventions. I had an assisted birth with my midwife and her team and this my baby and I's plan that was most comfortable and safe.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:13:10 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Renée bossert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:13:53 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kourtney pfor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect burning choices

Testimony of
Nicolle L. Arthun, BSN, RN, MSN, CNM, FACNM
Navajo Nation



Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice-Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Greetings Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chairs, and all members.

I am writing today in **strong support of HB 1328**, relating to Midwifery.

I am a Navajo Nurse-Midwife who has practiced Nurse-Midwifery for over 18 years in hospitals, birth centers, and home birth settings throughout my career. I have seen the value of integrating traditional birthing practices in midwifery by creating pathways for the community to attend births on their terms. I have also worked with Indigenous Nations around the globe, where Indigenous women are fighting for their right to practice in the community. While I am a trained and licensed midwife, I have seen how regulation, licensure, and educational pathways for midwifery can be used against communities trying very hard to provide quality and equitable care. Structural racism is often built on the premise that only the highly educated can provide midwifery and that it's the only pathway for safety. Throughout my career, I have witnessed firsthand the increased safety that happens when the community is centered and are active participants in the process of creating culturally centered protocols that are thoughtfully integrated with the Western medical model of care. In parts of the world and the United States, only adhering to the medicalized model of care that views birth and pregnancy as disease management and not a natural process of development, I have seen an increase in maternal mortality. With Native Americans and Hawaiian Natives having the second highest rates of maternal mortality as compared to White women, is evidence the medical model of care is failing our communities. Increasing regulation and implementing criminalization measures further creates barriers for midwives to practice safely in the community and widens the gap with where birthing families can go for care.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- **It comes from the community.** Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- **There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer.** It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- **The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care.** Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the

Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.

- **Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with.** If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- **Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected.** We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- **Cultural birth practices are a human right.** This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- **It protects families.** The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- **It protects reproductive choice.** The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- **Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed.** Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people and really not fair.
- **Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives,** which would help lower-income birthing families greatly.
- **Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs,** which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank You
Nicolle Arthun, BSN, RN, MSN, CNM, FACNM

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:18:13 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:19:27 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannis Webb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill as its a right to all parents to continue to decide how and where they will have their children. As its been for thousands of years.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:20:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elissa wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:20:55 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ashley t yu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery as it is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

Hello my name is Ashley Yu and I live in the puna area of the big island. This measure is important to me because restricting midwife practices does not make anything safer and instead will push practices underground and create less access, support, and care for those in need. If the fear of legal repercussions are inament, it could interfere with the unlicensed midwives communicating with doctors about medical emergencies or conditions. In addition, this measure will support basic human reproductive rights and allow cultural birth practices to be practiced and continued. The measure will also support local clinical midwives to get licensed which supports both the economy and community.

For all these reasons and more I request that you please pass HB1328

Thank you

Ashley Yu

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:21:37 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:23:31 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Makalani Franco-Francis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT HB1328. As a plaintiff in the current lawsuit against the State of Hawai‘i, a Kānaka Ōiwi home birth mom, and Student Midwife.

- This bill protects cultural practices.
- This bill would reinstate the PEP and the accessible training apprenticeship accepted in most states.
- This bill expands maternal health care.
- This bill is the solution to the lawsuit that the State of Hawaii is currently facing.

Organizations SUPPORTING this bill include:

- OHA
- ACLU HAWAI‘I
- COUNTY OF MAUI
- COUNTY OF HAWAI‘I
- COUNTY OF KAUA‘I
- WAIMANĀLO NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO.32 CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
- HAWAII HOMEBIRTH COLLECTIVE
- PACIFIC BIRTH COLLECTIVE
- KO‘OLAUPOKO HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUB
- LAHAINA STRONG
- MAUI MEDIC HEALERS HUI
- KA LĀHUI HAWAI‘I
- LA LECHE LEAGUE OF HAWAI‘I, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, NORTHERN NEVADA
- MAUI RAPID RESPONSE
- MĀLAMA NA PUA O HAUMEA
- MAUI HOUSING HUI
- ĒWE ‘OIA‘I‘O
- KŪLANIĀKEA

Mahalo for your support,

Makalani Franco-Francis

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:23:55 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Titiri Charton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:24:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Le Baron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open-making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community.

Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:26:23 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ha'aheo Mahinai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Emily Williams and I am a resident of Lancaster. I am testifying in **support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaula'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Emily Williams

Additional Resources and Guidance:

[Midwifery Factsheet](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective)

[Midwifery Bills Comparison Table](#) (Ea Hānau)

[Recording of our Legislative Advocacy 101 Training](#) (45 mins)

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:32:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Risa Matsudaira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support home birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:36:13 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Postel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1328 and think women should have the right to choose how they'd like to birth their babies. Midwifery care is important to have as an option to those who decide to birth out of the hospital. Please do not take this right away from those who choose a different path into becoming a parent.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:36:27 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Deanna Young and I am a resident of Hilo and a mother who plans to have more children in the future, and I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.

1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices
without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your consideration,

Deanna Young

Additional Resources and Guidance:

Midwifery Factsheet (ACLU of Hawai'i)

Midwifery Bills Comparison Table (ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective)

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:37:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Rose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:37:37 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sample testimony for you to customize:

“Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and

Committee Members,

My name is Andrea Martinez and I am a resident of Kahului. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328,

relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.

1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure

- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system. There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Andrea Martinez

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:38:41 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariah Strong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Mariah Strong

Paia-Haiku, Maui

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I write this as one of the co-founders of Pacific Birth Collective and as the current Programs Director, but I want to be clear that I am speaking from my personal experience and perspective.

I was born and raised in Hawai'i by a traditional midwife who has served our community for over 40 years. Growing up, I witnessed firsthand the deep responsibility, skill, and cultural importance of midwifery in our islands, especially in rural areas. This experience shaped my commitment to birth work and inspired me to become a midwife myself.

I chose to pursue the MEAC-accredited schooling pathway, and for the last twelve years, I have been working toward my midwifery license. This process has been extremely difficult. I had to leave my home, family, and community and move out of Hawai‘i to gain the required experience. I have worked in three different states with over two dozen midwifery preceptors just to meet the required birth experience numbers. This journey has been financially, emotionally, and culturally challenging. Not only have I had to navigate the immense cost of education, but I have also had to learn within a system that does not recognize or support the cultural values of my community. One where students repeatedly state that after you graduate, you should forget everything that you’ve learned through school and go back into your community to learn from experience.

Every day, as a co-director of a non-profit that serves women and children, I see the urgent need for greater access to midwifery care in Hawai‘i. We are in a maternal healthcare crisis, and we need major change to ensure that families can access the care they deserve. This means creating equitable pathways for local midwives to become licensed. Without a PEP pathway, many experienced birth workers will be shut out of the profession simply because their training does not fit into a system designed for the continent, not for our islands.

As I prepare to begin my own Certified Professional Midwifery (CPM) practice by the end of this year, I am deeply concerned that existing restrictions will limit the care I can provide. One of the first and most important lessons I ever learned is that a birthing person has the right to choose who supports them during birth. Reproductive choice includes birth choice, and restricting midwifery or cultural birth practices only harms our families.

This bill is critical because:

- It comes from the community. Many midwives, cultural practitioners, legal experts, and organizations have worked together to craft a bill that ensures all types of midwifery practice are included.
- There is no evidence that restricting midwives improves safety. Instead, it forces midwives underground, making care less safe.
- The real danger is lack of access to care. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people sought care at fire relief hubs—care they already struggled to access before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized.
- Hospital transports must not be dangerously interfered with. If midwives are not legally recognized, they cannot properly communicate with hospitals during transfers, putting families at risk.
- Hawaiian cultural birth practices must be protected. When traditional practitioners and their students are prevented from practicing, we lose irreplaceable ancestral knowledge.

- Cultural birth practices are a human right. The lack of culturally aligned care directly impacts maternal mortality.
- It ensures reproductive choice. Every birthing person should have the right to decide who supports them in their most vulnerable moments.
- It creates a fair pathway for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Currently, 97% of licensed midwives in Hawai'i are not from here, and none are Kanaka Maoli. Without a PEP pathway, local midwifery students' experience is not recognized, creating a systemic barrier to licensure.
- It supports Medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives. Medical reimbursement is essential to providing care for low-income families in my community. Without it, culturally competent care will remain out of reach for those who need it most. Ensuring midwifery services are covered by Medicaid will expand access to safe, quality, and culturally appropriate care for all families, not just those who can afford to pay out of pocket.
- It expands the scope of practice for CPMs and CMs, allowing them to access more tools to provide safer care.

For all these reasons, I urge you to pass HB 1328. Our families deserve access to safe, culturally rooted, and community-driven midwifery care.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Mariah Strong

Paia-Haiku, Maui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:39:53 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dakota Sanborn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:40:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB1328!! this bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices. I support access to traditional, cultural, or religious midwifery care!!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:41:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karese Miguel-Hamakua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of Hawaii HB1328, which seeks to recognize and protect the roles of licensed and traditional midwives and birthworkers in the state of Hawaii. This bill is essential not only for the protection of both the practitioners and the families they serve, but also for the preservation of the rights of women to choose how they bring their children into the world, and who is with them during their birthing experience.

Importance of Midwives in Maternal Health

The role of midwives in maternal and infant health has been recognized by multiple national and international health organizations. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), midwives provide essential services in prenatal, labor, delivery, and postnatal care, particularly in settings where access to traditional healthcare providers may be limited or unavailable. WHO further states that skilled midwifery care is one of the most cost-effective methods of reducing maternal and newborn mortality (WHO, 2018). In fact, countries with well-established midwifery systems see lower rates of intervention during birth and better outcomes for mothers and babies.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also recognizes the value of midwifery care as part of a balanced approach to maternal care. The Office of Women's Health, a division of HHS, highlights that midwives can reduce unnecessary medical interventions, enhance positive birthing experiences, and contribute to higher satisfaction rates among women who choose midwifery care (HHS, 2020). By supporting HB1328, Hawaii would be aligning with both state and national health recommendations, ensuring that women have access to safe, diverse, and culturally appropriate care during pregnancy and childbirth.

Inclusion of Traditional Midwives

Hawaii has a rich cultural heritage, and the practice of traditional midwifery is an important aspect of that heritage. Many women in Hawaii, particularly from Native Hawaiian and other cultural communities, choose traditional midwives due to cultural preferences and trust in their practices. Traditional midwives play a crucial role in providing care that is deeply rooted in local customs, language, and beliefs, often offering a more personalized, holistic approach to childbirth that many women find reassuring and empowering.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has acknowledged that "midwives bring a different perspective on childbirth that reflects diverse cultural traditions and belief systems" (ACOG, 2015). It is vital that traditional midwives are recognized and supported in Hawaii to ensure that women who prefer this form of care are not limited in their options. This

bill would safeguard their right to choose traditional care and ensure that such care is both recognized and regulated for safety and quality.

Women's Right to Choose Who is With Them During Birth

One of the most fundamental rights a woman has is the ability to choose who will be with her during the most intimate and transformative experience of childbirth. The presence of a trusted birthworker, whether a licensed or traditional midwife, offers reassurance, emotional support, and advocacy during labor, which can significantly reduce the stress and fear many women experience. Studies show that women who feel supported during childbirth report greater satisfaction, less postpartum depression, and better long-term health outcomes for themselves and their babies.

The American Pregnancy Association (APA) emphasizes that emotional support and continuity of care during childbirth have been linked to better outcomes, including lower rates of cesarean sections and interventions. The presence of a familiar birthworker, whether a licensed or traditional midwife, helps ensure that women are empowered to make informed decisions about their care, whether they are at home, in a birth center, or in a hospital setting.

Conclusion

HB1328 is a critical step toward improving access to safe, diverse, and culturally competent maternal care for all women in Hawaii. By supporting both licensed and traditional midwives, we honor the right of women to choose their birth teams and ensure that those teams are trained, regulated, and protected. This bill will protect the safety, autonomy, and well-being of mothers and babies, and I urge you to support its passage.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sources

- World Health Organization. (2018). Midwifery. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/midwifery>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health. (2020). Midwives: Providing Safe, Effective Care. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/midwives>
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2015). The Role of Midwives. <https://www.acog.org/patient-resources/faqs/labor-and-delivery/the-role-of-midwives>
- American Pregnancy Association. (n.d.). Benefits of Having a Birth Doula. <https://americanpregnancy.org/preconception-health/birth-doula-benefits>

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:42:06 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Mann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Julie Mann, and I am a resident of Waianae. I am currently pregnant and have been supported by OB MDs, OB NP, midwives, and doulas throughout my pregnancy. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, which relates to midwifery. As an ICU nurse, I have firsthand knowledge of hospital protocols and conventional medical practices. Through my own pregnancy journey with midwifery care, I have experienced a comprehensive blend of holistic support and evidence-based medical care, demonstrating the value and safety of this approach.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Julie Mann

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:45:17 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Pickard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:48:02 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Maitino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:50:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Rosenthal	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:51:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Tylor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

To the Committee on Health & the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
By 'Ōhi'a Midwifery & Wellness Midwives

02.09.25

Re: HB 1328 RELATING TO MIDWIVES

Chair Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice-Chair Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy, Chair Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, and
Vice-Chair Rep. Cory M. Chun,

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 1328

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1328.

We are a group practice on Hawai'i Island, 'Ōhi'a Midwifery & Wellness. Our practice includes a Certified Midwife (CM) and Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs). We support continuation of a midwifery licensing program for the benefit of public interest. We are aware of the widespread provider shortage throughout the State. We support HB 1328 as it establishes access to care as integral to public safety.

HB 1328 established access to routes to nationally recognized pathways to credentialing. And, for license maintenance, for the CM and CPM, HB 1328 reflects what is required of other established practicing midwives as CNMs or APRN/CNMs in Hawai'i.

HB 1328 establishes our credentials to the national standards of ACNM and NARM in definitions and scope to enable us to practice to the full extent of our credentials, including prescriptive authority based on our credentials.

HB 1328 addresses insurance reimbursement. We have seen directly how families seek out midwifery care and wish that care could be reimbursed by insurance including Medicaid. As all providers at 'Ōhi'a Midwifery & Wellness have also worked in other states where their services were reimbursable by insurance, we request this essential access as a public health and right to access to care be thoroughly addressed in a replacement midwifery bill. HB 1328 expands access to licensed midwifery care.

Our practice participates in provision of precepting for midwifery students to achieve their credential to serve the families of Hawai'i. We support legislation that allows for state-based students to achieve credentialing to enable them to serve the communities in which they reside. HB 1328 does this!

In this hearing, where two midwifery bills are up for debate, we request committee members to reflect upon the issue of public safety to be seen in light of access, carefully considering how the CM and CPM are impacted by your decisions and establish accountability to DCCA in establishing this program

We recommend consideration of HB1328 for the basis moving forward as it addresses specifically access to care in regulation of our credentials referencing national standards in all aspects.

Mahalo for you time and consideration of our testimony,
The midwives of 'Ōhi'a Midwifery & Wellness
Kealakekua, Hawai'i
ohiamidwifery@gmail.com

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:54:28 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoelehua Hook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Support of HB1328: Protecting Access to Midwifery and Traditional Birth Practices in Hawai'i

I strongly support HB 1328, which ensures continued licensure for certified midwives and certified professional midwives while protecting the rights of traditional birth attendants and expanding access to culturally competent maternal care in Hawai'i. This bill addresses critical gaps in maternal healthcare access, respects Indigenous and community-based birth traditions, and upholds individual choice in childbirth.

Why HB1328 Is Necessary

1. Preserving Maternal Healthcare Access

Hawai'i faces severe maternal healthcare shortages, especially on neighbor islands, forcing many pregnant individuals to travel long distances for care.

This bill ensures that home births remain a legal and safe option, reducing barriers for those seeking community-based birthing services.

2. Recognizing Cultural and Traditional Birth Practices

Many families in Hawai'i prefer birth practices rooted in their cultural and spiritual traditions, such as those of Native Hawaiian practitioners (e.g., pale keiki, lola, sanba).

HB1328 acknowledges these practices and ensures they remain protected while also allowing for credentialed midwives to operate legally.

3. Increasing Safety and Reducing Unattended Births

Since restrictive licensure laws took effect, there has been a 42% increase in unattended home births.

By legally recognizing all birth practitioners, HB1328 reduces risks associated with stigma and lack of integration with hospital-based care when emergencies arise.

4. Expanding Licensure Pathways for Local Midwives

The bill highlights the need for more accessible pathways for Hawai'i residents to become licensed midwives.

Currently, all accredited midwifery schools are located outside of Hawai'i, making it difficult for local practitioners to obtain certification.

5. Ensuring Consumer Choice and Bodily Autonomy

Every birthing person should have the right to choose where and with whom they give birth.

HB1328 reaffirms that individuals can seek care from traditional birth attendants without unnecessary legal barriers.

Conclusion

HB1328 is a crucial step toward equitable maternal healthcare in Hawai'i. By balancing the need for licensed midwifery care with respect for traditional birth practices, this bill strengthens both safety and accessibility. I urge lawmakers to pass HB1328 and support the diverse birthing needs of Hawai'i's families.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:54:45 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nykol Happy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:54:54 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nora O'Rear	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:57:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Letisha Thomas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mom of 3 my experience with homebirth has been nothing but great. A woman needs to be comfortable and relaxed to be able to peacefully bring her baby into this world. There is no better place to do this then in the comfort of her own home.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:57:30 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Mau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to you in support of HB1328. With both of my births I had the great privilege of being under the care of two extraordinary midwives who took such great care of myself and my family during this very important time. Women need to have access to midwives for their births and more importantly the choice to have access to midwives for their births. If you take away this very necessary profession women and ultimately families will suffer.

Thank you,

Malia

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:57:35 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara del Fierro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support of HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:59:16 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Mosk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support this bill!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:59:42 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liisa VanderHeyden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm a mother of 4 children, I have given birth in 3 different hospitals and seen many many OB/GYNs and midwives. The best births have been with midwives. With my first 2 kids I gave birth in a military hospital with regular obstetricians taking care of me, I have nothing positive to say about them, they did not listen to me nor my wishes, only trying to control my every move. I was made to push on my back both times and both times I broke my tailbone. After which I could not sit down for a month, the first birth even caused me severe bladder problems. After those 2 horrific births I started to look even more deeply into natural, NORMAL births and how to listen to ones body. With my 3rd child, i started seeing midwives, who told me I had an android pelvis, that's why I had difficult births, when I mentioned this to some of the obstetricians, they hadn't even heard of the 4 types of pelvic bones in women! I learned that women with my pelvic type must not give birth on their back, but be on their side or "on all fours". Thanks to the midwives my 3rd and 4th birthing experiences were so much better. If there would have been an obstetrician in my labor room, I would have had to get an emergency c-section, like so many other women who have android pelvises, because babies tend to get stuck in android pelvises. OBs like to do things their way, without listening to moms, midwives in the other hand, work WITH moms, trying to avoid major complications at all cost, that's why it is so important to let midwives practice. Women who have PTSD from giving birth in a hospital, under an OBs care, need to have the opportunity to heal by having a positive birthing experience at home or in a midwifery clinic. Giving birth feels like something sacred, something holy and it's instinctive, someone shining bright lights in your private area ruins it, a woman will tense up, lose her instincts on how to give birth naturally. Midwives are highly trained and women should have the option to use them and choose where they want to give birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:02:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corina Smoker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:05:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Pecana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:05:23 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Avicolti	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for your time and consideration,

I am writing today in strong SUPPORT of this bill HB1328, relating to Midwifery. We are in Hawa'i. We need to support cultural practices and choice of birthing 'ohana in a place where this was once normalized not too long ago. When families are empowered and supported, we see healthier, desired outcomes. That is the goal so we can raise up future generations right. As a mother, Native Hawaiian, and Birth worker in my community for almost 10 years now, I have witnessed this first hand. Our midwives are highly trained, skilled, and safe in what they do. Please vote yes on this bill.

Mahalo nui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:05:41 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte Leger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328,

This bill expands access to birth care and allows families to be supported in the ways they chose, in a culturally, and individually significant way. There are many ways to birth, and women have been doing this FOR ALL OF TIME. Please allow families to chose and expand their support network in one of the most meaningful transitions of their lives.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:06:54 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenessa Knight	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- SUPPORT HB1328 - This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, protects birth assistants, and keeps the PEP pathway for midwifery certification open—making midwifery more accessible to birth workers in Hawai‘i and therefore home births more accessible for families in our community.
- I personally did a beautiful successful home birth in 2023 and it was the most magical and beautiful experience and I'll tel u one thing not one person who had a hospital birth can say the same thing. We are animals and birthing a baby is a natural experience and midwives are there to make it safe and comfortable please don't take that away from us.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:07:16 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bridget milligan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:10:27 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Ye Nguyen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha HLT/CPC Honorable Chair & Committee members,

I am full SUPPORT of HB 1328.

I am a licensed naturopathic physician, home birth mother, home birth practitioner, supporter of a family's rights to choose to birth either in the home and hospital setting.

Many reasons have been or will be presented to your committee today as to why this bill is a good bill for midwifery care...the one that I am most passionate about is that this is one expansive and inclusive of all our cultural practitioners and community.

It also includes the PEP pathway, which is an educational pathway that passed down from generation to generation of midwives. This type of training is extremely valuable and cannot be lost.

Ultimately, as a licensed physician our job is to protect the health of our families. This bill protects the health of our families by keeping options to them open. A woman's right to choose whom and how they birth is very private. What is best for one isn't necessarily right for another.

Our families need options not restrictions. By restricting who can help support our families, midwifery practices will be either lost or driven underground. When there is a lack of transparency & communication between our families, midwives and western medical care, when and if need that's when it is unsafe.

This bill, HB1328 is expansive and inclusive, supporting our cultural practitioners and community. It takes a village to bring a baby into this world, not just "licensed professionals" deemed by the state as appropriate.

The opposing bill, HB 1194 is highly restrictive and unclear. It excludes many other practitioners who are highly qualified to help support our families. It will actually make home births more unsafe in many ways.

Midwifery is a very complex...it's not so black and white when it comes to education, training and who is "fit" to be one. The definition of "midwife" has been hijacked by the state through

the years and only certain people can legally use this title, CPMs and CNMs as certified by the state.

The community decides who their "midwife" is, not the government ultimately. Women and families will still give birth with whomever and however they want. I hope that each and every one of you know the gravity of what your vote means to the health and safety our families, truly.

Please SUPPOSE HB 1138 and OPPOSE 1194. Thank you for takiing the time to understand this very important bill and always for your service.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ye Nguyen

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:10:41 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Olson-Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Stephanie Olson-Moore, and I am a resident of Hilo, Hi. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- - Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
 - Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
 - Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
 - Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
 - Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
 - Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
 - Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages that are truly harming our

families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your time & consideration,

Stephanie Olson-Moore

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:11:24 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
robin knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Women have been safely giving birth for millenia without the interference of government entities in their personal decisions for how to do it. Women and their 'Ohana should have the right to make this fundamental choice for themselves without being criminalized. Native HAwaiians and Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of maternal deaths. Hawaii is 50th - worse in the country - on providing pre-natal care. Our islands are short of wetern physicians and healthcare, it makes no sense to require that be the only choice women have. I support HB 1328 that would allow UNRESTRICTED BIRTH CHOICES AND GREATER MATERNAL AND INFANT CARE

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:12:41 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Steciuk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Cassandra, I was born and raised on Kaua'i and am a home birth mother and doula. I strongly support HB1328 as this bill is pono. It protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support and to criminalize it in any way is wrong and hurtful to mothers, their ohana, and the community.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:14:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miles Greenberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Allows a woman to choose where and with whom she gives birth." The legislature noted in Act 32 that "mothers and families seek out alternatives to hospital births and they find significant value in community or home birth services. The legislature also found that "these services have been provided by individuals identifying themselves as traditional or cultural practitioners, midwives, certified professional midwives, lay midwives, direct entry midwives, birth keepers, or birth attendants."

As a civil society, we must allow women options to burn their babies as they see fit while still providing safeguards to both mom and their babies

SUPPORT this measure!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:18:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
brady stewart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is the bill that protects Kanaka Maoli cultural practitioners and birth assistants. HB1194 DOES NOT!

This bill also allows for midwives to train in an apprenticeship model which makes it possible for prospective midwives to remain on island while learning their trade. HB1194 will force them to travel off-island to study in accredited programs. **Both pathways require the same examination and number of births attended to receive licensure, so no clear advantage exists from being forced to leave Hawaii to receive training.** HB1194 will actually make it illegal for midwives in training to attend births, thereby making it a virtual impossibility for them to gain the experience necessary to become a registered practicing midwife. This will also create an obstacle to currently practicing midwives who rely on their assistants to provide support.

Natural, physiological birth is not an emergency in most cases and there is plenty of good reason why many mothers choose not to give birth in a hospital setting. Please pass this bill to give them as many safe options as possible. The effect of attempting to force them into a broken medical system which cares more about selling drugs than caring for people will be to cause more of them to birth unattended. If this bill is not passed, we will most certainly see an increase in unattended births and the resulting spike in potentially detrimental outcomes.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:19:02 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Schneider Mercado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Jenna Schneider Mercado, and I am a resident of Pearl City. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328,

relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.

1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections

- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and wellbeing. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jenna Schneider Mercado, LSW

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:19:09 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Inouye	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Takayama and the Committee on Health and Chair Matayoshi and the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

My name is Colleen Inouye and I am a Maui obstetrician/gynecologist testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I practiced in Maui for over 35 years, and I saw firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. I was part of a residency program that allowed midwives to accomplish the above. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

Thank you for your kind attention,

Colleen F Inouye MD MS-PopH FACHE FAAPL FACOG

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:22:09 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shalei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly is support of midwifery bill 1328

As this bill protects our individual right and authority to the birth care we choose to be safe and in alignment with our spiritual and medical needs.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:23:48 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Sara Kahele and I'm from 'Ewa, O'ahu. I AM IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1328.

I am a mother of 6 (5 daughters and 1 son). I have had 4 home births with a traditional midwife. I trust her with my life and with the lives of my children. I will NOT give birth with anyone else, regardless of their certification or license. My daughters deserve the right to choose who they would like at their births in the future.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:24:57 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Gibson-Viviani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Committees,

I support HB1328 because I would like to see the traditional practice of midwifery protected by law. It is an essential feature of maternal healthcare access and traditional Hawaiian practices.

Please show respect for women's reproductive choices--to use the services of a midwife.

Thank you,

Wendy Gibson-Viviani RN

Kailua

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:25:56 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Botello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. This bill expands access to birth care and is the correct direction for greater freedoms for the people of Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:26:25 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr Valerie Simonsen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha...As a medical provider to Hawaii, I support the HB1328 bill to protect birthing choices and the most comprehensive way to be a viable resource in Hawaii.

Mahalo

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:26:31 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amelia Patterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:28:53 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Women deserve to make a choice, and to choose qualified cultural practioners.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:29:22 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caitlin Reposar	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, I am a mom of 2 testifying in favor of HB1328. I have personal experience with receiving care from a midwife here on Oahu for my second pregnancy. I originally met with a OBGYN because of the lack of Certified Nurse Midwives on island at the time. I wasn't receiving the care that my baby or I needed, so as a family we decided to hire a homebirth midwife. The care I received from her was something I've never seen or experienced from an OBGYN. I wasn't a number. It wasn't a chore to answer my questions or hear my birth plan. I felt seen, cared for, and valued, as did every member of my family. I experienced many nursing challenges after both of my pregnancies, which triggered some postpartum anxiety. With my first, my providers in the hospital were not much help. I eventually experienced postpartum depression. With my midwife, however, she made time for me and my baby to ensure my desire to breastfeed was carried out. She focused on making sure I was healing not only physically, but emotionally and mentally as well. Here's some perspective: I received more care postpartum from my midwife, than I did with my entire first pregnancy under the care of an OBGYN for prenatal and postpartum. That says a lot. As women, we want to be valued and heard. Giving birth is not only sacred, but it requires women to be vulnerable. In those moments, we should be given the right to choose who we have at our birth. Please pass HB1328. Mahalo.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:29:40 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Baker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1328 protects and supports indigenous culture and all families. It is our right to choose who attends our births. We need to support our local community by offering a way for locals to become midwives and stay in Hawai'i. Birth is a sacred act, and we should have the right to choose how we give birth. Please support HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:30:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisa Spring	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is of utmost importance to protect and have access to all available midwives including the lineages of traditional midwives and the cultural practices of indigenous communities. Yes to HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:31:59 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Im sure this is a common theme: my body my choice.

What a woman decides to do with her body is between her and her care provider of choice. Especially when it comes to where you want to give birth, and with who.

I support this midwifery bill to ensure midwives practicing in Hawaii meet certain skills and standards and licensing is clearly defined just like any other trade.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:33:28 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
valerie Lasciak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: My support of this bill is that supports individual birth choices

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:33:41 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support birth choices - centuries of practices

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:33:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is David Kahele and I support HB1328.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:34:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Romias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Tiare Romias and I support HB1328.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:35:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashlee Howard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keokokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and committee members.

My name is Ashlee Howard, and I am a resident of Honolulu. I am testifying in support of H.B.1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarentees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.1328 expands access to midwifery licensure and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience (this means to the full extent within their scope of practice)
- expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington, D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without threat or fear of criminalization
- allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B.1328 addresses Hawai'i maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and homebirths worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B.1328 provides the most robust reproductive and consumer protections and has garnered support from OHA, the ACLU of

Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hanau, the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations.

I ask that you please support H.B.1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i. Denying this would be equivalent to denying an entire culture and set of traditions that these islands were founded on long before this current time. Denying this bill means you are okay with snuffing out ancestral traditions that have been carried out for generations, further severing these connections.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Ashlee Howard, RN

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:35:38 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Treen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:36:14 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taelor may	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support because I have had a safe and successful homebirth and I believe woman should have that choice

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:36:33 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Griffith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Sarah Griffith, and I am a resident of Kapoho. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.

1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i,

Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Sarah Griffith

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:36:50 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Siaris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Alana Siaris, and I am a resident of Aiea, O‘ahu. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328 and opposition to H.B. 1194 relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- **Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience**
- **Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience**
- **Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure**
- **Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections**

- **Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practice without the threat or fear of criminalization**
- **Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization**
- **Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs**

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health. As a woman that has had a homebirth with zero complications, my greatest fear was that I would be forced to labor and birth my child in a medical hospital setting, which does not administer culturally responsive care to the mother, newborn, and ‘ohana involved.

Throughout my pregnancy I was faced with shame and stigma from my OBGYN who told me that she would no longer care for me if a homebirth is what I wanted. Birthworkers (midwives and doulas) that I sought for advice cared for me in confidence and with trust, as they made known the risks we were taking because of the laws currently in place here in Hawai‘i.

I come from a ‘ohana of women who have experienced traumatic births in the hospital setting, but for me, having a homebirth has been the most natural and sacred experience, and the best decision that my family has ever made. Every woman should be able to experience the sovereignty in birthing where and with whom she chooses.

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and practices that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai‘i, and oppose H.B. 1194 which is restrictive and discriminating.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Alana Siaris

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:37:12 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Manuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, and mahalo for letting us submit testimony. The first reason I support this bill is that I have personally experienced Home Births of 5 of my grand children from two of my daughters. The mother's healed faster than regular hospital births. The midwives, two different ones were excellent, and most knowledgeable. I had every confidence in them. More important was that my daughters had every confidence in them.

Homebirths, may not be for everyone, but....a mother should have the right to choose how she gives birth.

THAT is most important....the right to choose. Please remember that you represent we the people and if 3 people want the right to choose, you also represent THEM...and their right to choose. Why are we taking that right away?

Thank you for your time taken to read my testimony. Have a great rest of your day!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:37:25 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyra Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Kyra Kahele and I support HB1328.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.

- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.

- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:38:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Hughes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Samantha Hughes, and I am a resident Kalaheo, Kaua'i. I am testifying **IN SUPPORT** of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Kānaka Maoli traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-

being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Samantha Hughes

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:38:24 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Ravelo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:38:56 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support! Thank you

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:39:47 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Masahide T. Kato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to you today to express my strong support for HB 1328. According to the WHO*, the rate of Caesarean section has risen globally to an alarming level. In the state of Hawai’I, it has risen from 20.8 % in 2008 to 27.8 in 2023. I also noticed this trend over the years through my anecdotal observation of my students, the majority of whom are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian), at the UH West O’ahu. Most recently, one of my students (who is Kanaka Maoli) wrote her senior thesis on this topic after going through her second pregnancy and pointed out how it is now normalized in hospital birth. While the Caesarean section is critical in saving lives in complicated pregnancies and deliveries, WHO warns of the increase in unnecessary surgical procedures that could be harmful for both mothers and infants in the long term. As WHO suggests, the fundamental remedy for this harmful trend is to have more mother-centered care for birth.

I believe HB1328 can generate a more mother-centred care system in Hawai’I where mothers’ choices based on cultural norms, practices, values, and perceptions are fully integrated, particularly among Kanaka Maoli and Pacific Islanders. The lack of cultural competence among healthcare providers has often been brought up in my interactions with Kanaka Maoli female students in the West side. Our campus has instituted the Hawaiian and Indigenous Health and Healing Program to train students in traditional Hawaiian healthcare practices (lomilomi, ho’oponopono, and lā’aulapa’au) to address the lack of cultural competence among healthcare providers. Midwifery, as a traditional cultural practice, would be strengthened and effective if it is practiced in tandem with other Native Hawaiian healthcare practices.

In conclusion, HB 1328 is a significant step toward establishing a holistic healthcare system for mothers in Hawai’I through which mothers enjoy the choice of their maternal care and birth, while perpetuating the Indigenous cultural knowledge and practice optimally and sustainably.

Me ka ‘oia’I’o,

Masahide T. Kato, Ph.D.

- <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-06-2021-caesarean-section-rates-continue-to-rise-amid-growing-inequalities-in-access>

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:45:26 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaymie Lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Chairs and Committee members,

I strongly support HB1328, written in full transparency and collaboration, with input and advice from community members, concerned parties, cultural practitioners, national agencies, and legal counsel. HB1328 is a bill FOR THE BIRTHING PEOPLE. Please vote IN SUPPORT of HB1328.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

In light,

Jaymie Lewis, Mother of 3 children born at home in Kailua

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:46:52 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie Cleghorn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill. As a mother and wife i am in STRONG support of this bill. And please, keep future bills about midwives and birth out of government agendas, this is not your realm and a great example of government over reach. Please hear your citizens and vote in support of this bill. Mahalo.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:48:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suha Patel	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a board-certified OBGYN in Hawai'i. For the health and safety of Hawaii's families, I oppose this bill HB1328.

I understand that the state is short maternal and newborn health providers and severe access issues persist. But, as a state we should strive to improve access to high quality care over time as opposed to legally allowing for potentially substandard maternal and newborn health services through this bill. Please consider striving to uphold a clinically acceptable standard of care for the qualification of midwife in order to help build collaborative and high quality access to healthcare for our population.

Thank you for your time and commitment to maternal and newborn health.

Sincerely,
Suha Patel
MD, MPH, FACOG
Hawai'i Permanente Medical Group

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:48:18 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Khadijah Gause	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My mother's mother, her mother, and her mother were born at home with the help of unregistered midwives. My first child was born here on Hawaii during Covid 19 by the best registered Midwife the islands have. She has credentials and experience. I asked for her assistance because of her experience, not credentials. She did not restrict care, and she came with an amazing apprentice.

We have to protect our people and the knowledge each one can teach one.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:48:50 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Giles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support midwives supporting women.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:48:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marissa Abadir	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birth choices & safe access.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:49:48 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Kyle and I support HB1328.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:51:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssa Kline	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I innerstand that Bith is a process of Gods Design.

Our ability to cultivate sanctuary & keep ocytocin flowing is the most beautiful gift to give Our Keiki & a Kuleana at that.

I support natural Birthing Practices

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:52:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kendra Miranda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for advocating for freedom of choice and religion. As a mom of 6--all home births--I am grateful for the freedoms I had in choice (only hindered by the last bill implemented). Please vote in support of our future choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:54:27 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arien Reed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support and push towards law HB1328 to protect traditional and indigenous birthing practices in Hawaii and a woman's right to choose her birth team. Birth is a fundamental physiological process that is affected by the environment, and people in the environment, of the birthing woman and she deserves the right to give birth in a way that feels safe for her and her baby, and connects her to her ancestry and lineage, both ethnic and spiritual. Birth is a spiritual experience that deserve the utmost respect and should not be controlled by legislature that does not acknowledge this. Please make HB1328 law and support women in birthing in the ways that offer them meaning, support, and connection, reducing trauma for them and our future generations.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:55:10 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Jay Kaleimamahu Crowningburg Maioho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is a great need for this service in our community. Woman should be able to home birth safely , under the guidance of a locally trained Midwife.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:57:00 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cinthia beh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:57:39 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Kahele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Brian Kahele, I am from Miloli'i and I support HB1328.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.

- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.

- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:58:48 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Amos	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I support HB1328 which has been developed via a community process to address the needs of consumers, Hawaiian cultural birth workers, traditional birth workers of all cultures. We absolutely need to make more people legal and provide an on-island route to licensure via PEP so that we can expand the pool of local midwives and give birthing people more and better options.

As a mom who's had two home births I also very much appreciate the task force this bill would create. Though I knew a home birth was the right choice for me, I feared the repercussions if an emergency did happen and my midwife and the hospital could not trust each other enough to work together well. Why must my options be either or, home&stigmatized or hospital¬ the style of care I want?

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:58:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marissa Katz Bellani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support midwifery freedom as a mother of a newborn who had a safe and healthy delivery at home with my midwife and doula here in Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:00:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly in support of midwifery bill 1328. This bill protects our individual right and authority to the birth care we choose to be safe and in alignment with our spiritual and medical needs.

Mahalo

Kathleen Moniz

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:02:49 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I recently gave birth to my beautiful baby with the incredible support of my medical team and doula. While I deeply appreciate the care I received from my doctors and nurses, my doula provided an invaluable level of information, care, and support before, during, and after my labor and delivery that simply wouldn't have been possible otherwise. She was a constant source of comfort, knowledge, and advocacy, empowering me to make informed decisions and navigate the challenges of childbirth with confidence.

This proposed legislation, HB1194, threatens access to doulas and other birth support professionals like my own. It would force families like mine to rely solely on an already stretched-thin medical system, eliminating the crucial personalized care that doulas provide. For me, my doula wasn't just an extra set of hands; she was an essential part of my birthing experience. Limiting access to this kind of support will negatively impact families and the overall well-being of our community. I urge you to oppose HB1194 and support HB1328 to protect access to doulas, midwives, and the diverse range of birth support options that families in Hawai'i deserve.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:03:39 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Hamil	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition of HB1328

I am a licensed midwife on the Big Island, serving local families for the last 4 years and respectfully ask you to vote no on HB1328.

A licensure program exists to protect the consumer and HB1328 does not protect the birthing people and keiki of Hawai'i.

HB1328 does not require accredited education, does not provide title protection and does not support the advancement of the profession of midwifery.

Licensure based on completion of an accredited midwifery program meets the ICM global standards for midwifery education. Since the first accreditation of a midwifery program in 2002, the majority of states when implementing new licensure laws require MEAC education. This is in line with the growth of midwifery as a profession and upholds the safety of our communities above all else.

Title protection is an important element to consumer protection and informed choice.

Implementing a licensure program that has outdated language and scope of practice does not meet the current standards of midwifery and limits access to midwifery care, limits the overall scope of the profession and compromises the safety of birthing people and keiki of Hawai'i.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:09:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcus Gamble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill through multiple birthing experiences my wife had with a doula and a midwife. The difference in being supported by someone soo experienced and knowledgeable while also being soo personable and championing your birthplans is such a game changer and soo needed. Families need the extra personal touch and they need to have the right to carry out birthing in the way they see fit for their family. Modern western medicine is egregiously expensive, very transactional making you feel like a number and not a person, and I believe birthing needs to be put back in the hands of families when the birth is low risk and experienced midwives are involved.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:09:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eric Cluett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support making home births more accessible and less government/medical Bureaucracy

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:09:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Misty Cluett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:10:30 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Tsukamaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee members,

My name is Keith Tsukamaki and I am the partner of a Licensed Midwife (CPM)

I am writing in strong support of HB1328. This Bill will protect the traditional and cultural practice of midwifery while supporting womens rights to freedom of choice and bodily autonomy as guarenteed by the Hawaii State and United States constiution.

I ask that you please pass this bill,

Mahalo nui,

Keith Tsukamaki

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:12:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sofia Scheuerman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of H.B. 1328: Supporting Midwifery Care and Women’s Birth Choices

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Sofia Scheuerman, and I have had the privilege of living on the beautiful island of Kauai for the past six years. I am writing in strong support of H.B. 1328, a bill that seeks to support midwifery care and the rights of women to choose who, when, and where they give birth.

As a resident of one of Hawaii’s outer islands, I have personally witnessed the unique challenges our communities face when it comes to accessing maternal and infant care. The outer islands are often under-resourced, and the ability to choose an experienced, compassionate caregiver like a midwife can make a significant difference in the overall health and well-being of both mother and child. Midwifery care, with its individualized attention and focus on family-centered care, is a vital option that supports the diverse needs of our communities.

In midwifery, we spend an average of 1-2 hours with each client during prenatal visits, often coming to families' homes to provide in-depth, personalized care. This level of attention helps foster trust, allows us to address concerns comprehensively, and ensures that women feel informed and empowered in their birth decisions. In contrast, traditional OB visits tend to be much shorter—often lasting only 15 minutes—and may not provide the same opportunity for in-depth communication or support.

The benefits of midwifery care extend far beyond the birth itself. Midwives provide continuity of care, building strong, supportive relationships with families, which helps to reduce the risks of complications such as postpartum depression—one of the leading issues facing women in the perinatal year. By supporting women through emotional, physical, and informational needs, midwifery care can help prevent many of the challenges that often go unnoticed or unresolved in more traditional healthcare settings.

Moreover, H.B. 1328 would empower women to make informed choices about their birth experience, ensuring that their voices are heard, respected, and supported. The ability to choose a midwife, and to have that choice supported by policy, is essential for improving maternal health outcomes in Hawaii and ensuring equitable care for all women, especially those living on the outer islands.

For all these reasons, I urge you to support H.B. 1328 and to continue advocating for policies that prioritize the health and autonomy of women, as well as the essential role of midwives in supporting families through their journey into parenthood.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sofia Scheuerman

Owner of Kauai Birthing Wellness
kauabirth@gmail.com
Kauai Resident

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:12:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanisha Bruce	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kanisha Bruce, and I am a resident of Haleiwa. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery. I am an expectant mother and a fierce advocate for women's right to choose. I believe this right extends to how women choose to birth and who they have present at their births as support. My mother had me at home and I plan to have my child where I feel safe and supported and that is at home. If you look at the statistics there is no reason to criminalise Hawaii's long cultural birth traditions. Women should have the choice of where they feel most comfortable and confident.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kanisha Bruce

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:14:00 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Wyand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. Created by moms, dads, and people who care about PROTECTING BIRTH CHOICES now and in the future. This Bill EXPANDS ACCESS to birth care, allowing families to have UNRESTRICTED BIRTH CHOICES and greater maternal and infant care. It protects those in rural areas and traditional, cultural, and religious birth workers. Vote yes.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:14:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal Yasukawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Krystal Yasukawa. I am a mother, and have had home births.

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

Thank you.

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cori-Ann Hirai, and I am a practicing OBGYN in Honolulu, Oahu and I am testifying in **strong opposition to the HB1328** which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 9 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cori-Ann Hirai MD
OBGYN Physician and Assistant Professor
Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children, University of Hawai'i Dept. of OBGYN and Women's Health

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:15:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelani Paresa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Noelani Paresa. I am a resident of Kahului, Maui. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by demonstrating the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience.
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience.
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure.
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections.
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization.
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization.
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs.

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being.

H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages, currently threatening the health of Maui's population of women.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections, as guaranteed by the Hawai'i state constitution, and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations.

Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in the state of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Noelani Paresa

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:16:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Iwamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Members of the Committees on Health and Consumer Protection and Commerce,

I write in **SUPPORT** of **HB1328**, Relating to Midwives.

I am the proud mother of two beautiful, thriving children, both of whom were born in our home in Kāneʻohe. It was essential to their father and me that our children be birthed in an environment in which I was completely comfortable. As several of my close family members have died in hospitals by contracting viruses completely separate from why they were admitted to the hospital in the first place, I personally have a gripping fear of hospitals. While I completely respect the choice of others to give birth in such settings, I instinctually knew that this was not the right choice for me.

During the labor and delivery of both of my children, everything went smoothly, and I was completely at ease, thanks to my knowledgeable, experienced midwife and doula. I am fully convinced (and there is plenty of research to support my claim) that laboring in the comfort of my home, in an environment that allowed me to move with the contractions in a way that was instinctual to my body, and being surrounded *only* by people that I asked to be present were all essential elements to my smooth, relatively quick, and completely safe births.

The choice of who attends our births and who touches a woman's body during birth should be left to the birthing woman alone. HB1328 protects this right.

HB1328 protects the rights I enjoyed for my births for other women in our community. HB1328 expands care by protecting extended and hānai family. Families are essential. Nobody has the right to tell a birthing woman who can attend her birth or who cannot.

HB1328 protects cultural practices, allowing cultural practitioners to be exempt from licensure requirement. As stated in the bill, “the need for genuine cultural care, as well as for the revitalization of Indigenous traditions and self-determination has been highlighted in data and scholarship...”

HB1328 also creates a Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), which is a locally accessible training apprenticeship and training as a path to clinical licensure. This is the only realistic path for *local* clinical midwife students, as all Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) schools are in the contiguous 48 States, requiring travel. Because most entry midwife students are young

mothers, MEAC is not feasible for Hawai'i. PEP midwives are recognized by the majority of states and certifying bodies. They take the same exam and receive the same certificate as MEAC midwives.

Please protect women and women's rights by voting YES for HB1328.

Mahalo nui loa.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:19:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amalia Ruck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:19:23 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Johns	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1328. Midwifery care plays a vital role in maternal and infant health, but **removing licensure requirements** puts families at risk.

The **Hawai'i State Auditor's report** has emphasized the importance of regulation to ensure safety, competency, and accountability among midwives. Without licensure, families may unknowingly receive care from individuals **who lack standardized training and oversight**.

Every pregnant person deserves **informed choice and safe options**, which is only possible when midwives meet recognized educational and professional standards. I urge you to **prioritize maternal and infant safety** by rejecting HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica Johns, MD, FACOG

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:23:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nara Boone	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am the daughter of a midwife. I'm proud to say all three of my children were born at home. I have been present at 25+ home and some hospital births and can say difinitively: the decision of where and with whom a woman gives birth should be up to her, not a Westernized doctrine that fails to recognize the value, wisdom, experience and generational knowledge of lay, cultural and indigenous midwives. I am in support of making training more available for those who want it, here, in the islands. Please, pass HB 1328 and reaffirm the Western ways are not alwqays the right ways.

Mahalo

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:24:12 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julianne Spitzer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is important to me and my community as it protects culturally practicing midwives in a place so worth protecting indigenous rights.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:25:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seyna M	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way that protects birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:25:47 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaime Schrack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:26:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brianna Damas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support because this bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:28:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:29:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaimie Song	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Supporting HB1328:

I strongly support HB1328, which seeks to protect and regulate both licensed and traditional midwives in Hawaii. Midwives are integral to maternal health, offering safe, effective, and culturally relevant care, as recognized by the World Health Organization and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In Hawaii, traditional midwives are vital to the cultural fabric of our communities, especially for Indigenous and Pacific Islander women. This bill upholds a woman's right to choose who is with her during childbirth, ensuring personalized care that improves outcomes and satisfaction. Supporting HB1328 is a step toward preserving diverse birth options and empowering women to make informed choices for themselves and their families.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:31:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Merciful Ananda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a naturopathic physician and trained in midwifery. I attend out of hospital births and have helped many decide to have myself attend as a licensed physician and home birth practitioner, rather than birth on their own, unassisted. Unfortunately it is true that unassisted births in Hawaii are already increasing and will surge without your help.

I have lived on the north shore of Oahu since 2020. I completed all training necessary to practice as a licensed midwife in other states, however my additional training plus five years of medical school and 2 years of residency will not be recognized if HB 1194 goes through.

Because of covid and other infectious diseases, the number of people signing on for home birth is off the charts. People want to avoid exposures in the hospital, and they want the high quality health care that our home birth midwifery community provides. The majority of these people inquiring will do whatever it takes to make sure they get to birth outside of the hospital.

The in-hospital OBs, nurses and nurse midwives are overwhelmed and are sending people away. We need more INCLUSIVE legislation so our birth community can come together and build bridges between traditional birth attendants and conventional providers. HB 1328 has been years in the making to do just this.

If you care about reducing the incidence of infant and maternal mortality, Please oppose HB 1194. ALL THE SUPPORT FOR 1328!!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:33:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natali Galarita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a necessary bill to support hawaii's culture and families.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:34:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Echo Yarberry LM, CPM	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

My name is Echo Yarberry and I am a community midwife on the Eastside of the Big Island of Hawaii. I have lived in Hawaii for over 20 years, and grew up here in Puna before relocating to Denver and eventually Seattle to pursue my Masters in Midwifery and current training on best practice for midwifery care in a community setting. I have incurred significant student debts from my training, but it was important for me to be able to offer midwifery services in my community that are a safe and reasonable option for low-risk, healthy birthing people of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

Since returning to the Big Island and starting a thriving Midwifery practice in my community, I birthed my own son here - a planned home birth that was appropriately managed by a licensed CPM (Certified Professional Midwife) and ND (Naturopathic Doctor) and eventually transported to Hilo Hospital for medical reasons. HB1328 will support continued options for birthing families in Hawaii that is culturally appropriate and increase access to our community. We are currently experiencing a maternal health crisis due to a lack of providers that support birth (both in hospital and in the community/home setting).

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including community midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that works for all types of practice, and allows providers to work together. The community has clearly requested and strongly supported this measure.

- There is no evidence that restricting traditional and culturally trained midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Interfering with hospital transport for medical need is a great safety hazard. If midwifery care without a license or CM credential is criminalized, many midwives will not be able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital with a serious medical concern or in a true emergency. Parents may also be more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legally permitted to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during labor and delivery is important, in the same way that consent is important for all people in regards to who has access to touch their body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and evidence based practice, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural access to safe birthing options). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people and does not set a good precedent.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help low-income birthing families and relieve the strain on hospital and community resources.

- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including important safety measures like life-saving medication, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,

Echo Yarberry LM (Licensed Midwife), CPM (Certified Professional Midwife)

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:35:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members of the House Committees on Health and Consumer Protection and Commerce,

I am testifying in support of HB1328.

We should be protecting traditional birth practices of indigenous cultures, as well as providing safe and alternative options for pregnancy and birth practices.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Keoni Shizuma, from Kaneohe, Oahu

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:36:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Yamada Pangilinan, MD	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Michele Yamada Pangilinan, and I work in both urban and rural areas of Oahu as an Obstetrician and Gynecologist and Perinatal Addicton Medicine specialist. I am strongly opposed to this bill that will undermine the safety of our most vulnerable populations, birthing people and infants, and marginalized populations that fear the medical institution due to past trauma. I have practiced in Hawaii for 18 years, and I have been directly involved with caring for patients attempting home births with lay providers, who were wonderful support people, but unable to recognize problems with labor progress or the health of birthing person and baby during the labor process. In my experience as an Obstetrics hospitalist at the Kapiolani Medical Center, there are definite harms including septic shock from intrauterine infections, and postpartum hemorrhages requiring massive transfusions and sometimes hysterectomies. I have delivered babies with sepsis and hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy due to extremely prolonged labor or head entrapment from a planned breech delivery with unskilled provider. With that being said, I have had wonderful exeriences with midwives in the community who have the knowledge and training to recognize a complication and to effect rapid transfer to the hospital and consult a physician via phone to assist in planning. Patient care and outcomes are much improved. This is safe practice.

I honor cultural practices, patient voice and choice, and alternative care delivery options as these are important for healing in my patients with substance use and mental health disorders. I ask that these options for home delivery be vetted, informed, and safe. Licensure standards for midwives, like physicians exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. Allowing exemptions or disregard to standards of care is as egregious as allowing a physician without license to practice medicine. We pledge to do no harm as physicians and I am compelled to ask you to oppose this bill for the simple reasons of keeping professionals accountable and keeping the public safe.

Please protect us and vote no on HB 1328.

Thank you for hearing our voices,

Michele Yamada Pangilinan, MD, FACOG, FASAM

Assistant Professor, JABSOM

Generalist OBGYN, Hawai'i Pacific Health

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:36:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faye M Plescia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and have been personally impacted by having the ability to give birth with the support of a midwife and friends and family. As someone who is neurodivergent and who had hip reconstruction before pregnancy, having the ability to birth at home in my own time and comfort was what allowed me to have a child without invasive procedures to my body that were unnecessary.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:37:17 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brienne Lacaillade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good afternoon Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and all members,

I am writing today in **strong support of HB 1328**, Relating to Midwifery.

This measure is very important to me because:

- The community needs greater access to maternal care.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned with is lack of access to care.
- Pregnant people's autonomy needs to be respected including the ability to choose who can serve them in pregnancy and birth.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right.
- This bill protects families.
- It protects reproductive choice.
- It supports medical reimbursement for licensed midwives.
- I chose homebirth for my child with traditional midwives and would do so again.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard. Please support HB1328.

Sincerely,

Brienne Lacaillade

Master of Public Health, Certified Health Education Specialist

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:38:22 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Avery Olson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Avery Olson, and I am a practicing OB/GYN in Honolulu and Hilo testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during labor and delivery have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

Midwifery is a critical profession that requires knowledge in areas such as prenatal care, emergency response, complications during childbirth, and postnatal care. Without these essential skills, the likelihood of preventable harm increases. Licensure ensures that midwives meet minimum educational standards and are held accountable for their practice. **These standards are not just bureaucratic hurdles—they are a safeguard for public health and safety.**

Exempting individuals from licensure could lead to a situation where midwives lack the necessary education or experience to recognize and respond to complications, which can be life-threatening in a birth setting. **I personally have seen the harm that comes to babies and parents during a home birth with an unlicensed provider- and they are devastating.**

In addition, I would like to emphasize that this bill could have long-term consequences for the credibility and safety of the profession itself. The public’s trust in midwifery is closely tied to the understanding that licensed professionals adhere to rigorous standards. By allowing broad exemptions, we risk undermining that trust and jeopardizing the safety of those who seek midwifery care.

I urge the committee to prioritize the health and safety of all patients by maintaining strict licensure requirements for midwives. I respectfully ask you to reject this bill and ensure that midwifery care continues to be regulated by appropriate educational standards that protect the public.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Avery Olson

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:38:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Saville	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure that stops restrictions while keeping licensure for CMs and CPMs

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:38:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawailele Aki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko‘o wau i ka HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:40:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a public health professional committed to uplifting universal and culturally grounded health access for all birthing people, I urge you to support this bill. It is imperative that birthing people have access to the full range of midwifery options best suited to their needs and preferences. Maintaining protection for cultural and traditional midwives alongside certified midwives ensures the availability of this care in particular to rural communities and families who cultural birthing practices have been excluded from mainstream healthcare settings, leading to deleterious health outcome. Please support HB1328 to provide greater agency and options for birthing people in Hawai'i.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:42:47 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mo'iwai Victor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kāko'o HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:43:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Featherman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Matayoshi and Takayama, Vice Chairs Chun and Lee Loy, and esteemed Members of the Committies,

I am writing in strong support of HB1328, which ensures that families in Hawaii continue to have access to licensed midwives for safe, natural births in the setting of their choice. This bill is critical to preserving and expanding birthing options for families who desire a home birth experience under the care of skilled professionals.

Childbirth is one of the most personal and transformative experiences a family can have. For many parents, home birth represents a deeply intentional choice one that fosters connection, comfort, and autonomy in a familiar environment. It is essential that families have the freedom to choose how and where they give birth, supported by trained and licensed midwives who provide evidence-based care.

Licensed midwives play a crucial role in ensuring the safety of both mother and baby during home births. Their training allows them to identify and manage potential complications, while also providing personalized, holistic care that honors the natural birthing process. By supporting HB1328, we uphold the right of families to make informed decisions about their maternity care and ensure that those who choose home birth have access to qualified professionals.

Restricting access to licensed midwives would disproportionately impact families in rural and underserved areas, where hospital-based maternity care may be limited. Moreover, it would force some families to make difficult choice either foregoing the supportive care of a trained midwife or facing unnecessary medical interventions in a hospital setting that may not align with their values or needs.

Passing HB1328 is a step toward maintaining birth equity and reproductive freedom in Hawaii. It affirms that all families, regardless of their location or background, deserve access to safe, professional, and individualized maternity care.

I urge you to support HB1328 and protect the rights of families to choose the birth experience that is best for them. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Featherman

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:45:18 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taylor Kaaumoana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328. Mothers and families need all the support they can receive. I was staffed at the legislature and shortly after experiencing birth with some of our wonderful doulas and midwives on Oahu. I seen in my own life how important every person is who supports families who want to become pregnant, who are pregnant, giving birth and who are recovering through the postpartum stage. Hawaii as a whole would benefit from HB1328 passing through committees, floor hearing & for the Governor to sign into law.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:47:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezekiel Alapaki Bernabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The government should have no absolute authority and control on the anatomy, the biology, and the health of people.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:47:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kadi Verhaeghe	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Testimony of Katherine Verhaeghe

Paia -Haiku, Maui

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees,

I am submitting testimony today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I have been a traditional midwife on Maui for over 40 years. I have personally given birth to six children at home and have attended the births of hundreds of families throughout the islands, especially those in rural areas, low-income communities, and families who feel unsafe in the medical system due to cultural disconnects and systemic barriers. I have dedicated my life to ensuring that families, no matter their background, economic status, or geographic location have access to safe, culturally-rooted, and personalized maternal care.

This bill is not about me continuing my career, it is about ensuring that the generations of midwives who come after me have the ability to carry on this work, to serve their communities, and to uphold the traditional and cultural practices that have guided birth on these islands for centuries. If we do not pass HB 1328, we risk losing critical knowledge that has been passed down through our kupuna and practitioners like myself. Without legal protections and pathways for training, we are not just limiting access to midwifery. We are erasing a cultural practice that has sustained our people for generations.

This measure is crucial because:

It was created by the community, for the community. This bill reflects years of collaboration among traditional midwives, clinical midwives, cultural practitioners, legal experts, and organizations who understand the true needs of birthing families in Hawaii. It is a solution that works for all types of midwifery and allows everyone to serve safely and effectively.

Criminalizing midwifery does not increase safety, it makes birth more dangerous. When families are denied access to midwives, they do not stop seeking care. Instead, they are forced into unsafe or unsupported birthing situations. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires when many pregnant people sought care at fire relief hubs because they had no access before the fires.

Hospital transports need to be safe and supported. If midwives are criminalized, they cannot communicate with doctors in emergencies, putting both mothers and babies at risk. Families may also fear going to the hospital at all, worried about Child Welfare Services or legal repercussions for choosing a home birth.

Hawaiian cultural practices must be protected. Each time a kupuna or an elder midwife like myself passes away, we lose vast amounts of knowledge. If my students and others cannot practice legally, there will be no one left to carry on this wisdom. This is a direct threat to the future of Hawaiian cultural birth practices.

Birth is a human right. Around the world, research shows that access to culturally aligned care reduces maternal mortality. When people are denied the right to choose their birth attendant, we are putting their lives at risk.

It protects 'ohana-based birth support. In Hawaii, family plays a critical role in birth. The current law criminalizes even grandparents, aunties, and hanai family members from attending births. There is no evidence that these traditions are unsafe, yet they are being restricted.

It provides a realistic path to licensure for local midwives. Right now, 97% of Hawaii's licensed midwives are not from here, and none are Native Hawaiian. The current MEAC-based licensure pathway forces students to train on the continent, disconnecting them from the land, their culture, and their communities. HB 1328 would allow local students to apprentice under experienced midwives and count those births toward licensure, keeping knowledge where it belongs here, in Hawaii

It makes midwifery care accessible to low-income families. Supporting licensure pathways allows Medicaid reimbursement for midwifery services, ensuring that cost is not a barrier for families who want midwifery care.

It allows Certified Midwives (CMs) and Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) to practice at their full scope. Access to essential tools and medications enhances safety and improves outcomes for birthing families.

For over 40 years, I have fought for the rights of midwives in Hawaii, and I believe it is time to bring this fight to a conclusion. Midwives are here to serve our communities, and this bill ensures that we can do so safely, legally, and in alignment with our cultural values. The future of midwifery in Hawaii is at stake, and HB 1328 is the step we need to take to ensure that birth remains in the hands of the people.

I urge you to pass HB 1328.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Katherine Verhaeghe

Paid-Haiku, Maui

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:48:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marguerite Ann Heart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill! After successfully birthing 3 babies with 2 home births and 1 hospital birth here in Maui, AND witnessing the home birth of my precious grand daughter, AND witnessing the home birth of 2 of my closest friend's babies, all assisted by HIGHLY QUALIFIED midwives, it is VERY important to me that women have the choice of how and where they want their baby to be born. I also know many, many other women who have had successful home births. This is our right as women to choose. How dare anyone think that they can take this right away. Please do NOT take our rights away! Please PASS THIS BILL! NO ONE has the right to TAKE THIS RIGHT AWAY!! Thank you for listening and I pray that you support and pass this bill!

Sincerely,

Marguerite Ann Heart

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:48:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Tucker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of keeping our midwives as a functioning operation in Hawaii. They have given me and my family the opportunity to have care at home with people that care not only for the baby, but the mother of my child. It was beyond a beautiful experience, they took care of my family as if it was there own. Listened and payed attention to my wife in her hardest times. Pre-labor and post-labor. Having all the care at home and people in our birth team, made us know we made the right choice. Having our son born and put straight into our arms was a transcended experience and hope that anyone can experience it as well, if they choice.

Today this about choice, and I believe those who chose this route of birth, should be the ones making it. I supported my ladies right to make this decision, and I support any women who decides it for themselves.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:51:22 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Piltz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Women in the state of Hawaii, and everywhere, should be protected by the laws of that state in their choice of place of giving birth and birth attendants, and the state should provide avenues to licensure or education within the state if it is required by law. Cultural practices and education should be protected by these laws, as are virtually ALL AMA medical practices surrounding birth and pregnancy. Women should continue to enjoy the right to choose!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:51:27 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dinna Schwiering	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dinna Schwiering, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1328, which seeks to protect cultural practices in midwifery. As a mother who has experienced two home births, I can personally attest to the invaluable care, wisdom, and support provided by midwives.

Although I have health insurance and access to hospital-based maternity care, I chose to give birth at home because I felt safer, more respected, and better supported in that environment. The care I received from my midwives was unlike anything I would have experienced in a hospital setting. They not only guided me through my pregnancies and births with expertise and compassion, but they also opened my eyes to knowledge and traditions that I never knew existed.

The awareness I have gained from my midwives has profoundly shaped my views on medical care, medicines, and holistic approaches to health. Their teachings have empowered me to make informed decisions about my body and my family's well-being. This knowledge is priceless, and it should remain accessible to future generations.

I urge the Legislature to hear our voices and pass HB1328 to ensure that midwifery remains a protected cultural practice in Hawai'i. Families deserve the right to choose the birth experiences that align with their values, traditions, and well-being. Please support this bill to safeguard the wisdom, autonomy, and cultural heritage that midwifery embodies.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:53:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Littleton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:56:49 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dani Mathisen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dani Mathisen, and I am a resident ObGyn in Oahu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for three years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:57:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MICHAEL POSTEL	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 1328 is the best way to support and protect families' god-given birthing rights, which my wife and I rely on to live in accordance with our beliefs and values. Please pass this bill to support traditional midwifery and birthing practices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:00:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eboney Haprn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a mother of 4 and 3 out of my 4 babies were delivered at home. 3 out of the 4 would have unnecessarily ended in c-section in the hands of the wrong providers. It was important to me to birth my babies in a place that is comfortable to me with providers I can trust to be patient and see me as an individual with a unique experience. Birth is a natural process, not a medical condition. I recognize that medical conditions can arise with pregnancy and birth, and in some of those cases, a hospital birth is more suitable. However, that is a decision to be made between the birthing person and the provider chosen for that pregnancy. Being in a hospital and facing complications doesn't always guarantee the best outcome. As a black woman, the statistics of me surviving complications in a hospital birth are very dismal. I did have complications following my last two births. If it weren't for the vigilance of my midwives, it's possible I would not be here or my last baby would not be here without very harmful and unnecessary interventions.

I don't see the reason for limiting choice - women who want hospital births and interventions, even elective interventions that may come with more risks, are still able to choose that. But for those of us who want low intervention, comfort and personalized care, we ask that this choice be protected by law. Not only will that save lives, it will continue to further improvement in the medical field as women opt out of the hospital until they feel safe.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:01:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

HON. legislature I am writing on behalf of myself to Support HB 1328. As a practicing licensed CPM on Oahu, I believe this bill encompasses all of the needs of not only myself, but Those of our community, the community has spoken out over and over again in response to the Midwifery conversation many have spoken loudly to protect traditional and native Hawaiian practitioners is their desire. It is also my desire as well. It is important that we expand access and we Expand pathways to midwifery in Hawai'i . Everything else does not matter. I have been practicing on Oahu for some time and I'm able to confidently say that those midwives that are currently here and native practitioners that are currently here are skilled knowledgeable and experienced to the point that they add value to our community. A CPM's training should be honored, no matter what pathway they have taken to gain it. They have shown merit & credibility in order to obtain that certification. We must honor those certifications and allow the CPM to practice to the fullest extent with support of local traditional practitioners as well. I ask that you stop dismissing what is most important which is listening to the voice of the people. The people will not be satisfied until you have honored the request to protect traditional practitioners, and Hawaiian practitioners. this legislation has actively reached out to members of the community and organizations in Hawaii and has sought input from the people that are most impacted by this bill. Isn't that what the legislative process is about? Please pass HB 1328

THANK YOU,

A Ezinne Dawson LM CPM

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:03:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beckley Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in SUPPORT of HB 1328. Please VOTE YES on my behalf.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:05:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hunter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support midwifery and Hawaiian birth practices, there are many studies to confirm that these are a much healthier way for babies to be born, and that babies born in the hospitals are exposed to a lot more diseases and pathogens whereas the controlled home environment is a much safer place and allows babies to be born without issues of exposure. It's also unconstitutional to tell anyone how they should bring their children into the world. We have freedom of our bodies and religious freedoms that cannot be circumvented or forced out. Do you support this bill? I know the majority of the population here supports it as well.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:06:46 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madison Marcu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1328, which would expand access to midwifery care and protect diverse birthing traditions in our community.

This legislation is vital because it uniquely recognizes and supports all forms of midwifery practice - professional, cultural, and traditional. By acknowledging these different yet equally valuable approaches to maternal care, HB1328 preserves important cultural birthing traditions while expanding access to qualified care providers.

The bill's inclusive approach to midwifery training pathways is particularly significant. By recognizing multiple paths to becoming a qualified midwife, including traditional apprenticeships and cultural training alongside formal education programs, this legislation ensures that:

1. Communities can maintain their cultural birthing practices and wisdom
2. More aspiring midwives can enter the profession through accessible pathways
3. Experienced traditional midwives can continue serving their communities
4. The diversity of our communities is reflected in our maternal care providers

HB1328 fundamentally supports women's autonomy in choosing their birth experience. Every family deserves access to the appropriate care that aligns with their values and traditions. This bill protects women's rights.

It protects that right by preserving access to traditional and cultural midwifery practices, expanding the available pool of qualified care providers, recognizing the validity of diverse approaches to maternal care and supporting multiple pathways to midwifery practice

The need for this legislation is clear when we consider that many communities have long-standing birthing traditions that deserve protection and recognition. These practices have supported healthy births for generations, and this bill ensures they can continue to do so.

Furthermore, research has shown that access to culturally appropriate maternal care leads to better outcomes for both mothers and babies.

I strongly urge you to support HB1328. This bill represents a crucial step forward in women's rights, protecting birthing rights, preserving cultural traditions, and ensuring all families have access to their preferred type of maternal care. It acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to childbirth and that our communities benefit from having multiple options for midwifery care.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

Madison

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:07:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Safholm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will expand access to families accross Hawaii! It is a BIG step in the right direction!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:08:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eliza Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and want to expand access to healthcare in Hawai‘i and protect future generations rights to the same.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:09:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
benjamin simpson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposition to HB1328.

Aloha, my name is ben & a hawaii island resident ask you to please VOTE NO against HB1328. A licensure program exists to protect the consumer and HB1328 does not protect the birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

HB1328 does not require accredited education, does not provide title protection and does not support the advancement of the profession of midwifery.

Licensure based on completion of an accredited midwifery program meets the ICM global standards for midwifery education. Since the first accreditation of a midwifery program in 2002, the majority of states when implementing new licensure laws require MEAC education. This is in line with the growth of midwifery as a profession and upholds the safety of our communities above all else.

Title protection is an important element to consumer protection and informed choice. Implementing a licensure program that has outdated language and scope of practice does not meet the current standards of midwifery and limits access to midwifery care, limits the overall scope of the profession and compromises the safety of birthing people and keiki of Hawaii.

A vote no against hb1328 is a vote of yes for the safety of our moms & children. Please do not allow untrained birthworkers the same title as those with clinical(research & evidence based) practices.

Mahalo - ben simpson

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:09:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Gouveia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328 because I support birth choices. Families should continue to have greater access to birthing choices and other safer and healthier alternatives aside from hospital births.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:12:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorilani Keohokalole	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328 and ask for this committees Grace and understanding to move this Bill forward and Protect womens right to Choose how they would like to participate in their Birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:13:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanine Acopan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wonderful bill I fully support!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:14:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sweden kelaoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I'm for this bill because it protects midwives and

home-births. Home-births are apart of our culture and deeply rooted traditions. Its also a form of freedom to make that choice should be up to the laboring mom her self.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:15:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Dericks	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to urge you to vote **YES** on HB1328, which ensures individuals have the legal right to choose who supports women and their family's during pregnancy and birth.

Every person deserves the freedom to make informed decisions about their birth experience,. Restricting access to these providers limits personal autonomy, disproportionately impacts underserved communities, rural communities, and undermines centuries of proven birth practices.

By supporting this bill, you are standing for:

- Informed choice** – Empowering families to decide the care that best fits their needs.
- Maternal health equity** – Expanding access to skilled care, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- Respect for cultural traditions** – Protecting time-honored birth practices and community-based midwifery.

I urge you to stand with families and midwives across Hawaii by voting **YES** on HB1328. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to birth justice.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anne Dericks

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:15:48 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pua O Eleili Kelsi Pinto	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

HB 1194 Relating to Midwifery

Hearing HLT/CPC Committee

2/10/25 at 2:00 p.m. Room #329

Support to HB 1328

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, and Committee members

I am PuaOEleili Pinto, a direct descendant of Kahuna Lapa‘au Po‘ohina, who was part of the ‘Aha Hui Lā‘au Lapa‘au in 1867. This group of kahuna played a pivotal role in using Hawaiian healing practices to healing foreign-introduced diseases. They also contributed to the creation of Act 139, signed by Kamehameha V on June 24, 1868, which established the Hawaiian Board of Health, Papa Ola Hawai‘i (not to be confused with Papa Ola Lokahi, which was established in 1988). I am a Hawaiian practitioner and researcher specializing in hānau (birth), lomi (massage), and lā‘au lapa‘au (Hawaiian healing). However, it is increasingly difficult to exist and operate in Hawai‘i using my ancestral Kanaka ‘Ōiwi practices, not just for myself and my family, but also for our community.

HB 1328 presents an opportunity to alleviate the burden and fear of being criminalized under laws such as HRS 457J and HB 1194. These laws impose a Western medical framework that excludes traditional Hawaiian healing practices. The proposed definitions in HB 1194 disregard the validity and importance of Native Hawaiian cultural practices and the professionals who provide these services within our communities.

I began by referencing my tūtūman Po‘ohina and the ‘Aha Hui Lā‘au Lapa‘au of 1867, which took place 158 years ago. Hawaiian healers and leaders, like Ka Moi Wahine Ka‘iulani and Queen Kapi‘olani, have long emphasized the integration of Native Hawaiian healing with Western medical modalities. Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women and Children, for instance, originated as a birthing home in Queen Kapi‘olani’s own residence. Even after the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, this collaborative approach persisted, but it was eventually dismantled by the forces of medical colonization.

HB 1328 aligns with the vision that Ka Moi Wahine Kapi‘olani originally set forth. The bill embraces the integration of Native Hawaiian healing practices with modern healthcare,

establishing a more inclusive and culturally respectful framework for birth and healthcare services. It proposes creating a pu‘uhonua (a sanctuary) for all modalities of birth and birth care, ensuring that those who choose the licensure pathway can practice to their full scope, while also respecting and honoring cultural traditions. The bill’s commitment to expanding education through nationally recognized apprenticeship pathways ensures that practitioners, both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, have access to comprehensive training that integrates traditional and modern knowledge. This model is already successfully used in 27 states across the nation, helping to create more inclusive healthcare systems while honoring the diverse healing practices of different cultures.

Furthermore, HB 1328 recognizes that Hawaiian healing practices, including birthing, are an essential part of the community's health and wellbeing. There is an increasing demand for these practices from both Native Hawaiians and other residents who seek to connect with our ancestral knowledge and the land. Our community is calling for this shift, one that will help preserve and revitalize our traditions while working in collaboration with modern healthcare to provide better options for birthing and wellness care.

By supporting HB 1328, we are moving away from a history of exclusion and instead embracing a path of cultural revitalization and inclusion. The bill allows Hawaiian practitioners to fully participate in the healthcare system and be recognized for the expertise that has been passed down through generations. Rather than being sidelined by laws that prioritize Western norms, we can create a healthcare environment that reflects the rich diversity of practices in Hawai‘i, benefiting all residents, regardless of their cultural background.

Let us pass legislation like HB 1328 that respects and incorporates Native Hawaiian knowledge and practices into the solution. By doing so, we will not only strengthen our healthcare system but also honor the traditions that have sustained our people for centuries.

I am available for questions and further explanation if need be, Here is my contact information.

"Aloha loa ia e nalowale, paa kuu manao aloha i ka ‘āina hanau o‘u, paa mau a paa mau. A‘ole au e kipi, ‘a‘ole kumakaia, he aloha oia mau."

PuaoEleili K. Pinto

puaoeleili@gmail.com

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:16:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allie Biggerstaff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

I just birthed a beautiful and healthy boy at home this week with the help of my amazing midwives. I would birth at home regardless, so it's a safer option for us to have midwives available for assistance.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:18:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote YES!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:20:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitlin Joy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support on HB1328 because all birthing persons should have choice and autonomy in their birthing options. Midwives and traditional birthing practitioners are an integral part of our community and deserve to legally provide care for people who choose their services.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:20:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nichole Yessamie Calagias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This important bill allows for student midwives to learn on Maui in their communities through the PEP process with the midwives of the community so they can serve this unique island through informed consent as to how birth works on this aina. Also this bill allows for folks caring for thier families and ohana to do it a way where they dont abandon care out of fear of prosecution when there presence and report could be life saving. Protecting culrural practices without putting regualtion that is against the ways of the kapuna and requires documentation and written informed consent.

This bill allows CPM's like myself to work within the full scope of my training. Not allowing this limits the midwives ability to truly care for her client for fear of "breaking a rule" that one state made versus a rule another state may not have. Each midwife should be able to make clinical calls within her scope. The more narrow the scope the more complaints and investigations which is costly for the state of Hawaii and the program.

The time is now to trust the women that are caring for our Ohana instead of making thier jobs and awnserers to their higher calling an unnecessary burden. The more all midwives come together and support each other the more we learn and the safer our community of hapai wahine are kept safe.

Aloha

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:22:18 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ipuni Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a woman who did a homebirth, I understand how really important it is to keep the option open for women who want to have a safe and comforting experience at home for their own spiritual or religious beliefs. I'm grateful for my midwife and every woman should have access freely to one. Women will continue to have the birth story they desire, and midwives are integral in the safety and security of a home birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:22:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lana Rose Olson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and distinguished members of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce:

As a woman, a doula, and a potential mother, I strongly SUPPORT HB1328 and urge you all to do the same. I have been at births in the hospital setting and in the home setting, with both Dr's, CNM (Certified Nurse Midwives) and CPMs (Certified Professional Midwives), some that practice as Traditional Midwives do. There must be room for all of these practioners and for the choice. This will reduce the number of unassisted births with no providers present. It will make any necessary transfers from home to hospital that may be needed smoother. Not every birth is an emergency. The hospital option is great and necessary for those that are, but we should save those resources for those cases and support Home Birth Midwifery. This bill would create a task force for improving communication between home birth and hospital practioners when transfer is necessary.

Furthermore, in a time where womens' reproductive health choices are threatened by federal legislation, where maternal mortality rates are at an all time high for a developed nation such as ours, and where birthing persons of color are at an increased risk of maternal mortality, it is more important than ever to support legislation that seeks to expand a woman's right to choose her health care providers and the setting in which she receives that care.

The birthing person/mother can rest easy knowing she can have her extended and hanai family present at her birth, that she can birth in her home environment and according to her cultural practices, that she will receive postpartum care beyond the days that a hospital setting would provide (many CPMs and traditional midwives provide at least 6 weeks of in home care, after the birth). This postpartum monitoring and support alone is invaluable and a crucial piece of reducing the maternal mortality rate.

This bill provides support for Medicaid coverage further making this care accessible to all. It provides a licensure pathway through Apprenticeship and Testing that is accessible for Kanaka and other locals to complete without leaving the state or incurring undue financial hardship, allowing for more midwives in the community. This bill exempts cultural practioners and established practices are allowed as per a similar exemption arlready in place in Hawaii's nursing law.

This bill has been thoughtfully and carefully drafted with all of the widest base of safe birthing choices and includes support from the ACLU, OHA, Hawaii Home Birth Collective, and other Hawaiian Rights Organizations. I urge you to join these organizations in support of HB1328 and pass this bill forward.

Mahalo nui, Respectfully,

Lana Olson

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:22:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noah Hoopii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keep the PEP pathway open – making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted and available to our community. Every family deserve the right to choose their birth support – vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:22:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekapala Dye	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **SUPPORT HB1328**. As a Hawaiian, whose 3 children were born outside of hospitals and received the best care, it is important to me to preserve my children's ability to do the same legally, with providers they choose... Traditional or licensed. Please **vote YES** and expand access to quality care for Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:25:00 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kulia Pascual	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keep the PEP pathway open – making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted and available to our community. Every family deserve the right to choose their birth support – vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:25:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Kennedy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of this bill as it protects our individual rights and choices as a female giving birth and the care and support I deem necessary.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:25:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Goff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill HB1328. One of the many things that makes Hawai'i so amazing is the beautiful cultural practices. These practitioners support people in rural areas that don't have easy access to care, support underserved and underrepresented communities, and provide safe spaces for people of color. They provide the community with much needed support, care and resources, in the very limited options out there. These incredible birth workers are indispensable. They must be provided a pathway to apprenticeship, local training and local preceptors. This is just the basic support that these practitioners deserve for all the sacrifices they have made. They support families while also supporting their own. If you do not support this bill you are actively causing harm to the people and children who live here in Hawai'i.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:25:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Streich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am supporting HB1328 as a resident of Princeville, Kauai. Midwifery plays a significant role within our community, providing residents with the highest quality of care. It is important we continue to support our midwives and enable them to practice at their highest potential. Hawaiian cultural practices need to be protected and respected, affecting quality of life. Birthing rights need to be maintained and affects the health and wellness of mothers and babies for generations.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:26:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carie Kwan	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am Dr. Carie Kwan. I am a pregnancy and pediatric chiropractor and the owner of The Chiropractic Studio in Pearl City and Haleiwa. I support HB1328. I have personally had two homebirths in the last 3 years. The latest one was in October 2024. I strongly believe it should be a woman's right to choose where and who she births with. I would never want to give birth in a hospital unless it was completely medically necessary. Both of my births were attended by midwives. My births were the most empowering experiences of my life. I felt comfortable, safe, and ready in my own home to birth the way that women have been doing for centuries. Only in recent history that birthing at home with midwives have been condemned or looked down upon. If we take away this sacred right to choose as a woman, what more can the government take away from women? It is imperative that we preserve the traditional and cultural practices of midwifery in the state of Hawaii and not condemn the women that chose to birth at home and the women who chose to attend to those women who birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:28:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nikima Glatt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Takayama, Vice Chairs, and all members,

My name is Nikima Glatt, APRN-RX, FPMHNP-BC, DrPH candidate, and i am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a board certified nurse practitioner, a public health professional, and a first responder who has spent the past year providing medical and mental health care to communities devastated by the Lahaina wildfires as a Maui Medic and former Medical Director of the Maui Medic Healers Hui. During this time, I witnessed firsthand the challenges pregnant women faced in accessing care challenges that existed long before the fires but became even more urgent in the aftermath. Many sought care at fire relief hubs and within our communities because they had nowhere else to turn, and much of this care was provided by traditional midwives whose practice has been unfairly criminalized. I also saw the emergence of young Lahaina women and men stepping up to train as student midwives, carrying forward the future of maternal and infant health in Hawaii. I witness first hand the hard work, competence, and dedication our traditional midwives play in the overall public health and well-being of our community. Without our midwives, we would have lost more lives and this trend will only continue with restrictions placed on their practices.

This bill is critically important because it was shaped by the community. It ensures that all types of midwives”clinical, traditional, and cultural practitioners can work together to serve families safely and effectively. There is no evidence that restricting midwifery improves safety; in fact, it forces care underground, creating real risks. The true danger is lack of access to care, especially for rural and underserved communities.

Another major concern is hospital transport. When midwives are not legally recognized, they cannot communicate openly with doctors if a transfer becomes necessary, putting birthing women at greater risk. Families may also hesitate to seek hospital care due to fear of Child

Welfare Services or other punitive actions for choosing a midwife who aligns with their cultural or personal needs.

Hawaiian cultural practices must be protected. Each time a kupuna birth practitioner is lost, we lose a wealth of knowledge that cannot be recovered. If they and their students cannot practice, that knowledge dies with them. Cultural birth practices are a human right, and the lack of culturally aligned care contributes directly to maternal mortality.

This bill also safeguards ohana-based birth practices. Under current law, grandparents, aunts, and hanai family members are at risk simply for attending the births of their loved ones a practice that has been safely carried out for generations. There is no evidence that these traditions are unsafe, and they should not be criminalized.

Additionally, HB 1328 provides a realistic licensing pathway for local clinical midwives. Currently, 97% of licensed midwives in Hawaii are not from here, and none are Kanaka Maoli. This is because licensing is tied to MEAC-accredited schooling, which is based on the continent. Without a PEP pathway, the experience and training local students gain under Hawaii-based midwives do not count toward licensure, creating an unjust barrier that must be addressed.

Finally, this measure supports Medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, making midwifery care more accessible to lower-income families, and ensures that certified midwives have the full scope of practice needed to provide safe and comprehensive care.

For all these reasons and more, I urge you to pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,

Nikima Glatt, APRN-RX, FPMHNP-BC, DrPH Candidate

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:30:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elliott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe women should be allowed to use midwives at home if they want to.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:31:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Hocker	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha members of the CPC and HLT committees,

I live on the island of Maui in an area about 30 minutes away from the nearest hospital suitable for giving birth, being in a rural area, myself and other mothers rely on highly qualified individuals who take care of our community. They not just for the mother and baby, but for the entire family. This community direct care built me up in a way that benefited my family. I support HB1328 because access to prenatal, birthing and postpartum care should be at the discretion of the family. Until standard establishments can account the poor maternal health outcomes for many groups of women, it's safer to have care with someone who is experienced and culturally competent.

Mahalo,

Jordan Hocker

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:36:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Carlevato	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1328

Hawai'i State Legislature

Committee on Health & Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

Hearing Date: February 10, 2025, 2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Catherine Carlevato, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1328, which proposes to continue a licensing scheme for certified midwives and reestablish the home birth task force. As a parent who has directly experienced the benefits of midwifery care, I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this bill could have on families like mine who seek safe, individualized, and culturally respectful birth options outside of a hospital setting.

Concerns Regarding HB 1328:

1. Restrictive Licensing Will Reduce Access to Midwifery Care

When I was pregnant, I chose midwifery care because I wanted a birth experience that aligned with my values—one that prioritized autonomy, continuity of care, and evidence-based, holistic support. If overly restrictive licensing laws had been in place, I may not have had access to the qualified, experienced midwife who supported me throughout my pregnancy, birth, and postpartum period.

HB 1328 risks limiting the number of midwives able to practice legally in Hawai'i, which would disproportionately impact families in rural areas or those who cannot afford the increasing costs of hospital births. Families deserve to have options, and this bill could make midwifery care financially or logistically out of reach for many.

2. Disregards Traditional and Cultural Birth Practices

Hawai'i has a long and rich tradition of diverse birthing practices, including those led by traditional birth attendants and cultural practitioners. HB 1328 does not adequately recognize or protect these traditions, instead imposing a one-size-fits-all approach to midwifery that prioritizes bureaucratic licensing over community-centered care.

Families should have the right to choose care that aligns with their cultural and personal beliefs, without unnecessary government interference that forces them into restrictive medical models of care.

3. Unnecessary Administrative Burdens and Costs

The cost and complexity of licensing midwives under the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs will place unnecessary burdens on both the state and the midwives themselves. These barriers will discourage qualified, experienced midwives from practicing and create a system where only those who can afford to meet the regulatory hurdles can serve families. Instead of supporting families and midwives, this bill could increase healthcare disparities in maternal care.

4. Reestablishing the Home Birth Task Force Without Clear Goals

While the idea of a home birth task force may sound beneficial, previous versions of similar groups have not resulted in meaningful solutions that reflect the diverse needs of the community. Without clear objectives, broad representation, and a commitment to preserving access rather than restricting it, reestablishing the task force is unlikely to result in positive outcomes for birthing families.

Alternative Recommendations:

Support Multiple Paths to Midwifery Care

Hawai'i should develop alternative pathways for certification that respect both modern and traditional forms of midwifery education rather than imposing a rigid, exclusionary system.

Recognize and Protect Cultural Birth Attendants

Traditional birth attendants should not be required to conform to a Western medical model of certification in order to continue their essential work. Policies should protect these practitioners, not push them out.

Improve Access to Midwifery Care Instead of Restricting It

Rather than making midwifery harder to access, Hawai'i should focus on expanding birth options, lowering costs, and ensuring equitable maternal care for all families.

Conclusion:

I strongly urge you to vote against HB 1328 and instead focus on solutions that support midwifery care, respect cultural practices, and ensure families have the right to choose the care that works best for them. This bill will reduce access, limit options, and disproportionately harm families who depend on midwifery services. Please oppose HB 1328 and work toward policies that increase, not restrict, birth choices in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Carlevato

Katecarlevato@gmail.com

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:38:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ciera Fong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm a Hawaii resident married to a native Hawaiian. I'm in support of bill HB1328.

I've had all four of my children at home. Ages 13-5 yrs old.

We should have the right to choose and not have that God given freedom taken away from us.

Mahalo nui!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:38:42 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealohilani Hoopii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keep the PEP pathway open – making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted and available to our community. Every family deserve the right to choose their birth support – vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:39:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Starr Kalahiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Starr Kalahiki and I support HB1328. i myself have learned much about my own birth as i am a vanishing twin, through a midwife who was in the process of learnig and reclaiming this knowledge specifically within Hawaiian practices. It is not only important, but vital that we support any and everything these women need to do the work they do for the entire community.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:39:21 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Bear	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to **vote NO on HB 1328** because it **endangers public health** by allowing midwives to practice without essential licensure. Leading health organizations, including the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)**, support licensure as a way to ensure midwives are properly trained and accountable.

Without licensure, families may struggle to determine whether a provider meets safety standards, increasing the risk of **preventable complications**. Regulation does not eliminate choice—it ensures **all choices are safe and informed**.

For the well-being of Hawai'i's mothers and babies, I strongly oppose HB 1328 and ask you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bear, MD, FACOG

Testimony of

DEBRALEE P. KAILIWAI-RAY
PUUANAHULU, HAWAII ISLAND

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha, Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a direct descendant of Hawaiian birth practitioners; my paternal grandmother served and lived in the Ahupua`a of North and South Kona. It is very important and a human right having the access and the availability of culturally aligned and access care to Kanaka Maoli and for the future generations.

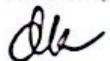
This measure is very important to me, because:

- **It comes from the community.** Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- **There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer.** It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- **The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care.** Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- **Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with.** If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- **Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected.** We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- **Cultural birth practices are a human right.** This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

- **It protects families.** The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- **It protects reproductive choice.** The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- **Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed.** Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- **Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives,** which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- **Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs,** which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,



HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:39:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julianne Byun	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Julianne Byun, and I am a resident ObGyn in Oahu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:40:54 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richelle Paoli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328 as it recognizes cultural practitioners and protects family choice, as well as increasing access to midwifery training and via these protections, increases access and safety for birthing people and families in Hawai'i.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:42:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Maxym	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

for the safety of our mothers and babies, please do not vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:43:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teresa Norton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of TERESA NORTON, KAILUA, OAHU.

I am writing today to support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a mother of a 6 month old baby and she is the mayor reason why I am supporting this bill.

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana.

There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.

- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

Thank you

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:44:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Margolies	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Here's a customized version of your testimony with a more personal touch and an emphasis on your connection to the issue:

****Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,****

My name is Chelsea Margolies Shockley, and I am a resident of Kaua'i. I am testifying in strong support of H.B. 1328, which expands access to midwifery licensure and strengthens maternal health care options in Hawai'i.

As a mother and someone deeply engaged in supporting parents through the transformative journey of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood, I believe that every birthing person deserves the right to choose where and with whom they give birth. The Hawai'i State Constitution affirms the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, and H.B. 1328 upholds this right by ensuring that culturally responsive, community-based midwifery care remains accessible.

This bill:

- ****Protects a birthing person's right to choose**** their birth attendants, place of birth, and support system.
- ****Allows licensed midwives to practice fully**** according to their training, experience, and credentials.
- ****Expands midwifery access**** by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway, already used in 27 states and Washington D.C., as a route to licensure.
- ****Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections**** while honoring diverse cultural and religious birthing traditions.
- ****Safeguards Native Hawaiian birthing practices**** from criminalization, ensuring traditional wisdom is passed down without fear.
- ****Provides exemptions for traditional birth attendants****, allowing them to continue serving families with informed consent and transparency.

Access to compassionate, culturally attuned care directly improves birth outcomes. This is particularly critical in our islands, where maternal healthcare shortages disproportionately impact families with financial, geographic, or systemic barriers to care.

There is no clear evidence that traditional midwifery or home birth increases risk to maternal or infant health. In contrast, research consistently affirms that supporting diverse midwifery models leads to ****better maternal health outcomes, higher patient satisfaction, and stronger community well-being****.

Among the midwifery bills under consideration, ****H.B. 1328** offers the strongest protections for reproductive autonomy****** and has earned the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai‘i, the Hawai‘i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, multiple counties, and numerous community organizations.

I urge you to ****support H.B. 1328**** to protect reproductive freedom and ensure that all birthing people in Hawai‘i—especially those in underserved communities—have access to safe, respectful, and culturally aligned care.

****Mahalo for your time and consideration,****
Chelsea Margolies Shockley

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:46:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Merrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:47:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaulalani Tauotaha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB1328 as a Native Hawaiian who chooses to birth my babies at home under the care and guidance of Midwives and other cultural practioners.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:48:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dillon Keoho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keep the PEP pathway open – making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted and available to our community. Every family deserve the right to choose their birth support – vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:48:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonya Niess	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sonya Niess, MPH

Maui, Hawaii

SUPPORT of HB 1328

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Dear Honorable Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and all members,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

My name is Sonya Niess, and I am a professional doula with 20 years of experience supporting families on the islands of Maui and Oahu. I also hold a master's degree in public health and am a proud mother of four. Over the course of my career, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges families face in accessing the care and support they need during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. This bill is deeply meaningful to me, both personally and professionally, as I have seen how crucial it is for families to have access to safe, culturally competent, and community-driven care.

This measure is especially important because:

- It comes from the community. Over my years of experience, I have seen countless families, midwives, cultural practitioners, and health professionals come together to support one another. HB 1328 reflects that community-driven approach. It was created through the collaborative efforts of midwives, legal experts, cultural practitioners, and organizations, all working together to ensure that this bill is comprehensive and truly meets the needs of families and practitioners alike. It is a reflection of what our community has been asking for: a bill that ensures safety, access, and respect for all types of care.**
- There is no evidence that restricting midwives makes anyone safer. In my work as a doula, I have seen how criminalizing midwives or driving practices underground only makes it harder for families to access safe care. This bill will help to keep birth options safe and accessible for all families, rather than pushing practices into unsafe or hidden spaces.**
- The real safety hazard is lack of access to care. In my public health work and through my experiences on the ground, I have seen that the biggest safety concern is not the practice of midwifery, but rather the lack of access to appropriate care. This became painfully clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs seeking care that they had already been unable to access before the fires. Many of these people were supported by traditional midwives who had been criminalized, and many young Lahaina residents became student midwives, representing a new hope for the future of maternal and infant health in the community.**
- Hospital transports are a serious concern. As a doula, I understand how critical it is for midwives to communicate effectively with doctors, especially in emergency situations like hospital transfers. If midwifery practices are criminalized, it becomes more difficult for midwives to communicate openly with hospital staff, which puts birthing families at risk. Parents may also avoid seeking hospital care, fearing the repercussions of working with an unlicensed midwife. HB 1328 addresses this concern and ensures that midwives can continue to support families safely, without fear of prosecution or criminalization.**
- Hawaiian cultural practices are vital and must be protected. As a doula and public health professional, I have seen the importance of culturally competent care in reducing maternal mortality rates. Hawaiian cultural birth practices are vital, not only to the health of families, but to the preservation of an ancient and invaluable knowledge base. Every time a kupuna (elder) who practices traditional birth care passes away without passing on their knowledge, we lose part of that cultural legacy.**

HB 1328 works to protect these practices and ensure that they can continue to be practiced and passed on to future generations.

- **Cultural birth practices are a human right. The right to choose one's birth care providers, especially when they reflect one's cultural values, is essential to the well-being of families. Studies have shown that when families do not have access to culturally appropriate care, maternal mortality can increase. This bill supports the human right to culturally aligned care, which is an important step in ensuring that families receive the best possible support during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.**
- **HB 1328 protects families. The current law, and many of the proposed bills, continue to criminalize extended family members—such as grandparents, aunts, and even hānai family—who attend births. This infringes on family rights and goes against long-standing traditions in many cultures. There is no evidence to suggest that the presence of extended family members at birth creates harm, and HB 1328 ensures that families are not put at risk of prosecution for simply following cultural and familial practices.**
- **HB 1328 supports reproductive choice. As a doula and public health professional, I believe that every birthing person has the right to decide who attends their birth. Birth is an intimate, personal experience, and the ability to choose who touches your body is a fundamental right. HB 1328 protects this choice, ensuring that families have the right to choose who provides their care during birth, without interference from restrictive laws.**
- **HB 1328 provides a realistic pathway for local clinical midwives to be licensed. In my experience, the lack of a realistic pathway to licensure for local midwives is a significant issue. Currently, over 97% of licensed midwives in Hawai'i are from outside the state, and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because current licensure requirements are based on mainland programs, and do not take into account the unique cultural needs and practices in Hawai'i. HB 1328 offers a pathway that would allow local students to count the births they attend under the supervision of a licensed midwife, enabling them to become licensed and better serve their communities.**
- **It supports Medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives. This bill will help make midwifery care more accessible for lower-income families by allowing Medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives. This will significantly reduce financial barriers and ensure that all families, regardless of income, have access to safe and culturally competent birth care.**
- **HB 1328 supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs. This bill ensures that midwives have access to the tools and support they need to provide the highest quality care to the families they serve. By supporting the full scope of practice for Certified Midwives (CMs) and Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), this bill ensures that midwives can use a full range of safe and effective tools, which ultimately benefits families.**

For all of these reasons and more, I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1328. This bill is an important step forward in ensuring that families in Hawai'i have access to safe, culturally competent, and community-supported birth care. It will help protect maternal and infant

health and ensure that midwifery care is available to all families, regardless of income or background.

**Thank you,
Sonya Niess, MPH
Doula & Public Health Professional
Mother of Four
Maui**

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:48:22 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dale Robins-Seabury	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of Bill 1328. I do not want to be criminalized for attending my daughter's birth. Indigenous Hawaiian birthing practices outside of the hospital is sacred. Our sacred birthing ceremonies should be allowed to be practiced wherever a family chooses to practice them.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:49:58 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Fantop	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments: Testimony of Erika Fantop, Maui Hawaii Committee on Health Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds, Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong, Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick Aloha Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members. I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery. I am a student midwife and doula working with community midwives on Maui. This measure is very important to me, because: It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly. There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe. The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health. Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife. Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive. Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care. It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way. It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice. Gives a realistic

way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people as well myself studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow us as students to count the births we attend with our teachers toward a license, so that we can eventually serve our communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local and BIPOC people and really not fair. Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly. Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve. For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328. Thank you Erika Fantop

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:50:07 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Saville	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill for many reasons.

Thank you,

Scott S.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:51:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonya Chung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families and keeps the PEP pathway open-- making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support. Please vote YES on HB1328. Thank you!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:51:12 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris James	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328.....created by the people for protecting the birth choices of individuals who care more than about health care than any government or corporate entity. If my body my choice is used to get legislation passed for abortions than the same my body my choice ought to have relevance for freedom of healthcare choice for birthing to get legislation passed.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:51:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Alexandra Kisitu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Dr. Alexandra Kisitu, Kaneohe, Oahu

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members:

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a medical sociologist, hold a PhD from UH Manoa, have dedicated over a decade of my life to research on homebirth and midwifery in Hawaii, and I am also a published author and mother to two children.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,

Dr. Alexandra Kisitu

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:51:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paiden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Paiden, and I am a resident of Ocean View, Hawaii. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization

o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Paiden Kennedy

Midwifery student

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:51:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Hahn, ND	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill in support of families who choose home birthing and need legal options to use trained and licensed and experienced professionals like ND's, CPM's and indigenous practitioners. After 28 years of delivering babies at home on Big Island, we need to continue to support families that will have their babies at home with or without them. More and more people are seeking this, and the limited healthcare resources in Hawaii are already very limited, please support the experienced among us to continue to support families and have babies safely at home, our personal, biological right.

Respectfully,

Dr. Jacqueline Hahn

246 Ululani St, Hilo, Hi 9672

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:52:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I had birth complications because transport was IMPOSSIBLE due to making birth attendants illegal. Outlawing women attending women is HURTING women and babies. I survived but others may not be so lucky, and I have lasting injuries from the birth that may never heal.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:53:48 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randi Egdamin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HB1328 because it protects birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:54:41 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bethany Chavez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members, My name is Bethany Kahea Chavez, and I am a resident of Kaneohe. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery. The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and wellbeing. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to a ord care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system. There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health. There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 o ers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i. Mahalo for your consideration, Bethany Kahea Chavez

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:54:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joshua M Gerega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members,

I support HB1328 because the bill protects reproductive rights (choose who is best to assist delivery of children), religious rights (commitment to personal religious beliefs and responsibilities), parents rights (to choose a safe and secure place for delivery of children) and citizens rights (to protect native population growth).

This bill (HB1328) is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices and safeguard the future of our state.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:55:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cailin Goodier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama & Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and Committe Members,

My name is Cailin Goodier and I am resident of Pukalani, Hawaii. I am testifying in support of HB 1328 relating to midwifery.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:55:56 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Austin Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- SUPPORT HB1328 - This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, protects birth assistants, and keeps the PEP pathway for midwifery certification openâ€”making midwifery more accessible to birth workers in Hawai‘i and therefore home births more accessible for families in our community.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:56:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brissa Christophersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HB1328 which protects our cultural practices of birth, identify the scope for the practice of licensed midwives, clarify the services that licensed midwives are eligible for insurance reimbursement, and adds locally accessible training for clinical midwives. As a native Hawaiian, it is important to me and my ‘ohana that we maintain and perpetuate our traditional birthing practices.

I gave birth in August of 2024, and throughout my pregnancy journey I was blessed with the support and guidance from traditional midwives and pale keiki. The high quality of prenatal care and advising I received were paramount to my experience and incomparable to the western medical prenatal care that is conventionally available to wāhine hāpai. I accredit much of the birth of my healthy baby (and myself during and after labor) to these birth attendants, traditional midwives, doulas, and other birth workers (native Hawaiian or not) who support birthing Hawaiian mothers.

Please support upcoming generations ‘ōiwi and their ‘ohana by supporting this Bill. Your mo’opuna will thank you for standing up for their rights to how they want to birth and protect our traditional practices so that they may have the choice.

Mahalo,

Brissa

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:56:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marirai Tauotaha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB1328. I am in support of keeping the most sacred ceremony in any culture, safe and accesible to all who choose it, without shame. We must continue to build up our practice of midwifery, especially from a Hawaiian cultural lens. We need training and licensure available here in Hawai'i. Please follow the guidance in HB1328 and those who helped to write it.

Mahalo me ka ha'aha'a,

maui

Marirai Tauotaha

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:57:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Saito	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:57:17 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tara mattes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need all sorts of birth workers for the variety of women on this island who have their variety of preferences

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:57:23 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kirk Powles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Don't let the white man, tell Hawaiians how they can have births.

King Kam was born on a rock in Keahou. Let others do the same.

Be born like a king!!!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:57:54 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anuheha Sridharan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to voice doubt if this bill would get a fair hearing cconsidering that this bill will be competing against 1194 and both committee chairs have signed on to this bill instead. This appears to be a conflict of interest. I would like to express my strong support of this bill HB1328, however when it seems only one bill can move ahead, and 1328 is vetted by a lot of community groups, supports the Native Hawaiian community and would support the health of the lahui I am fearful it will not get a chance for a fair democratic process when it is assigned to these particular committee chairs. I ask for fair consideration of these factors by all committee members when considering moving this bill ahead.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:58:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Lam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Mahalo for writing this bill. I am a Hawaiian woman living in Hawai‘i and will choose home birth as my delivery option for when I am pregnant. I strongly support this bill that protects mid-wife licenses for home births and allows me access to mid-wife services when the time comes.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Kristy Lam

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:06 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
christy Kalama	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Gratitude and Blessings to our midwives and birthing supporters

May they continue to offer their community the leveled up care they are seeking

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:13 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tryslynn Kauionalani Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and the right to have these options and freedom to choose.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Healy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Ho‘oponopono

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zen Powers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB1328 as I believe this is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices in Hawaii and expand much needed access to maternal and infant care! As a father of two healthy daughters who were born at home, I want to safeguard their rights to one day give birth in the ways they want, with whom they choose.



Testimony of: Daniela Martinez
Licensed Midwife, Certified Professional Midwife
Actively attending home births on Oahu.

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair
Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,
Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members,

I am in full SUPPORT of HB1328 and ask you to please support and pass this bill.

I support this bill because it accurately reflects my needs and that of the communities actually receiving midwifery care. It's an accurate reflection because the authors actually took the time to talk to the midwives, cultural practitioners, and families affected.

I support HB1328 because it allows Certified Professional Midwives and Certified Midwives to each practice to the full extent of their unique scopes of practice.

This bill allows me to collaborate with traditional Birth Attendants, Cultural Midwives, Certified Midwives, Naturopathic Physicians, Grandmothers, and various Cultural Practitioners. **Considering there are currently only 4 licensed midwives with active home birth practices on Oahu, the ability for me to work with various birth providers is paramount to me offering safe, robust , and culturally appropriate care.**

Passing HB1328 is supporting women's right, women's autonomy, and peoples Hawai'i state and American constitutional rights. It is protecting cultural and religious rights. It is protecting traditions- of Hawaiians and of the many ethnicities that exist in Hawai'i.

I know home birth sounds scary to most of you. I know you've even been told some scary stories. But we can't base laws off of fear. We can share an extensive amount of

hospital birth horror stories. But fear based decision making is not the way. Scary things can happen in any setting.

Restricting access to provider choice, and provider training and licensing pathways limits women's birthing options and drives up free births. Free birth is when someone decides to birth without the presence of any trained or experienced provider. This may sound hard to believe - but I know these women. When they are faced with no provider who is legally allowed to help them in the ways they desire - some mothers choose to birth on their own. Do we think it is safer for someone to birth alone than to be legally supported in birthing with her culturally appropriate provider?

Not all Hawai'i licensed midwives actively attend births, or even live in Hawai'i. So 41 licensed midwives does not mean there are 41 midwives actively surviving throughout the state.

Let us honor cultural diversity. Let us now fall into the old patterns of cultural hegemony. Colonization. Let us help women have options and protect the integrity of their human rights.

Respectfully,
Daniela M.G, LM
danielamartinez.midwife@gmail.com

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Nakagawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Jenny Nakagawa - Honolulu, Hawai'i

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a local mom of three children — all products of high risk pregnancies that required heavy medical intervention. Even though I gave birth at hospitals, I treasure my initial birth plans for a home birth and believe that moms and dads across our state have the right to decide the situations and circumstances in which they welcome their children into the world.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunties are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native

Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,

Jenny Nakagawa

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:59:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maya Maxym	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I strongly oppose HB 1328 because it undermines the safety of birthing parents and newborns by removing essential licensing requirements for midwives. The Hawai‘i State Auditor has recommended full licensure to ensure midwives meet professional standards, and leading organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) support regulated, evidence-based midwifery care.

Without proper licensure, families may struggle to distinguish between qualified and unqualified providers, increasing the risk of poor outcomes. Regulation does not restrict choice—it ensures that all midwives are trained, accountable, and equipped to provide safe and culturally appropriate care. As a pediatrician practicing hospital medicine for the past 12 years, I have seen far too many infants who died or have avoidable and irreversible brain injury as a result of not receiving enough oxygen during birth or in the minutes after birth. In fact, I had a dear friend when I was in medical school whose healthy term baby was stillborn as a result of attempting vaginal birth after cesarean at home. Had she known how to choose a properly credentialed midwife, perhaps that child would be alive and thriving today.

I support birthing parents' right to choose how and where they give birth, and I strongly support maintaining access to indigenous and other traditional healing practices. However, this bill does not provide adequate protections for pregnant people or their infants and should not be passed in its current form. The DOH does not properly track outcomes of home births (among other things because when emergencies arise and patients are transferred to hospital too late, those outcomes are counted as hospital outcomes). Every pediatrician and ob/gyn I know has many tragic stories to share, and we are all passionate about helping to prevent more families from suffering the way many of the families we have cared for have suffered.

For the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s mothers and babies, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Maya Maxym, MD, PhD, FAAP

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:00:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Morea Mendoza	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments: Aloha members of the Committee on Health and the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, My name is Morea Mendoza, and I was born and raised on the island of Maui. My daughter was born and raised on Maui, my husband was born and raised on Maui, and our families on both sides all reside on Maui. I am in strong support of HB1328 as the midwifery licensure program affects the choices I am able to make for myself and for my ohana. HB1328 provides a thoughtful, inclusive, and culturally responsive approach to midwifery licensure, ensuring that families have autonomy in their birth choices and that midwives can be trained and licensed without unnecessary barriers. I urge the committee to pass HB1328 to ensure that midwifery in Hawai‘i remains community-centered, culturally grounded, and accessible to all families who seek it. Mahalo for your time and consideration. Morea Mendoza msomaoang@gmail.com

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:00:05 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erzsi Palko	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To members of the Hawai'i House of Representatives:

I am urgently requesting that members of the House of Representatives vote “**YES**” on HB1328:

As a woman, born and raised on O’ahu, I want to insist on a right to true choice in health care surrounding the birth, including choice in birth attendants for non-emergency births.

Certified midwives and certified professional midwives, to my understanding, are required to follow narrow Western medical models of care. I deeply appreciate that this bill acknowledges the reality that our state has skillful and experienced birth attendants who may not possess certified midwife, certified professional midwife or traditional Hawaiian practitioner status. I appreciate that this bill acknowledges a range of care options available for healthy women seeking non-hospitalized births.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:00:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1328 that protects cultural practices , adds PEP , locally accessible training , and expands care options

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:01:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
D. W	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:01:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ghia Borges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ghia and I am a homebirth mama of 2. I support HB1328 expanding midwifery care in Hawai'i.

Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:02:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
shannon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of midwifery and hawaiian midwifery practices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:03:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicolle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

“Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Nicolle Villari and I am a resident of Ocean View, Hawaii. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well- being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to aXord care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Nicolle Villari

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:04:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Terrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is the most comprehensive way to protect bi
rthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:06:13 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Billie Terao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. As a cultural practioner and receipient of Hawaiian cultural healing. I am in support of HB1328. As a Kanaka Maoli, our verbal cultural practices is passed down from generation to generation. In relation to Kanaka Maoli Healing practices, this is not "a self taught" practice. Guidance, instruction, insight with hands on application is the foundation of our practice. We reserve the ability to determine the "validity and certification " of our practices, not defined by western interpretation, but deeply rooted in our Spiritual Guidelines and processes.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:08:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alohi Aea	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am a Native Hawaiian woman who has chosen to birth all four of my children at home. If this bill is not passed, if I have any children in the future, the woman who attended three of my births will not be able to do so legally. Given the small number of practicing midwives in Hawai'i, I have concerns as to whether or not I would even be able to find a midwife available to attend my birth.

The access that this bill gives to practitioners to both serve community here as well as learn and train in state is access that we need. Since the birth of my first child, I have been to the legislature almost yearly to testify for legislation that would allow me to access the kind of care that I feel is best for my body and my family.

I beg of my legislators to pass this bill that will allow me to have choices regarding who is with me at one of the most impactful and intimate moments of a woman's life--the birth of a child.

Me ka mahalo,

Alohi Ae'a

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:11:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Linde	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this measure. It creates a future for a positive relationship between families, midwives, the medical system, and policies. It is culturally appropriate and beneficial. Mahalo!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:13:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kristyna vaculik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. This bill protects traditional Hawaiian midwives, ensures birth assistants can continue serving families, and keeps the PEP pathway open—making midwifery certification more accessible. By preserving these options, HB1328 helps keep home birth safe, culturally rooted, and available to our community. Every family deserves the right to choose their birth support—vote YES on HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:13:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kamemoto, MD, MPH	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 9, 2025

To: House Committee on Health and House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From Lori Kamemoto, MD, MPH

Re: HB1328

Position: Strong Opposition

Dear Chairs Takayama & Matayoshi, and Committee Members:

As a Hawaii Obstetrician-Gynecologist for 30-plus years, I respectfully urge you to vote NO on HB 1328 because it endangers public health by allowing midwives to practice without essential licensure. Leading health organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), support licensure as a way to ensure midwives are properly trained and accountable.

Without licensure, families may struggle to determine whether a provider meets safety standards, increasing the risk of preventable complications. Regulation does not eliminate choice—it ensures all choices are safe and informed.

For the well-being of Hawai'i's mothers and babies, I strongly oppose HB 1328 and ask you to do the same.

Mahalo for your support of Hawaii Women's Health!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:21:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alika Valdez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:25:30 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaiana	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

‘o Ka‘iana‘ahu‘ula Kalokuokamaile Jennings

He kōkua ana wau i ka wā hāpai keiki, ma ka wā ho‘ohānau keiki, a me ka wā ma hope o ka hānau ‘ana o ku‘u tita Lehia/Eleili. Ua kōkua wau i ko‘u mau mākua e ho‘omākaukau i nā lapa‘au, nā mea ‘ai, ke ahi, a me ka lomilomi aku. Nui nā kuleana kāne i ka wā piha o ka hānau keiki. Eia ka ala hele e ho‘i i ka mauiola o ko kākou Lāhui a me ‘Āina Hawai‘i. No laila e, Na Representatives, "E kū‘ē i ka HB 1194. Oppose HB 1194. ‘A‘ole pono. Support 1328."

English Translation:

Ka‘iana‘ahu‘ula Kalokuokamaile Jennings

I assist during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, as well as with the care of my sister, Lehia/Eleili. I have helped my parents prepare remedies, foods, fire, and lomilomi (massage). Men have many responsibilities during the full process of childbirth. This is the way to restore the life force of our people and the land of Hawai‘i. Therefore, to the Representatives, "Oppose HB 1194. Do not support HB 1194. It is not right. Support HB 1328."

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:36:02 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mai Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support pale keiki and midwives who continue to practice our indigenous nature. Please support our community and HB 1328. Mahalo

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:48:09 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tiana lolotai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am supporting this bill because of the benefits and blessings that midwives play in my role. I have given birth in the hospital with my first two children and only when I had midwives assist me and help me along my journey with my third child did I feel safe, supported, empowered, and loved.

so far I had two homebirths soon to be three. One of them being with my twins. They hold such a special place in my heart and we Polynesians need this in our lives for generations to come given it was the way of our lives.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:48:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

*My name is Noelle Lindenmann, and I am a resident of Kailua-Kona. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.*

*The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:*

- - *Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience*
 - *Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience*
 - *Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure*
 - *Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections*
 - *Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization*
 - *Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs*

*Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.*

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

*There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.*

Mahalo for your consideration,

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:51:46 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trevor Terrell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

this bill is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:02:05 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
A. Nakaima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of this bill for the following reasons:

I frequently hear concerns about severe healthcare provider shortages in Hawaii to which the bill supplies an answer. Here is a bill that seeks to open up a pathway (PEP) to local residents to be able to establish themselves in much needed healthcare delivery, a pathway that is available in other states and which our current HI law accepts for licensure CPMs trained in other states through this same pathway, but the PEP pathway is not available for HI residents unless they want to move to the mainland for training. Most midwives are women with children and for whom moving to the mainland would be difficult and disruptive to their families. We need to provide reasonable pathways for women residents to be able to become credentialed in professions that would allow support for themselves, filling a gap, and contributing to the greater good.

My support of this bill is deepened as I have observed that this bill HB1328 has been worked on for at least 8 months by numerous volunteer organizations and the ACLU Hawaii; it has been vetted and endorsed by Hawaii, Maui, Kauai counties (an earlier version of this same bill is HB407 introduced by Speaker Nakamura by request of Maui county); endorsed by OHA; vetted by and approved of by attorneys involved in last year's lawsuit and abides by the partial injunction of the court to protect native Hawaiian practices. The many revisions over the many months of outreach and deliberation have addressed the concerns raised by the various stakeholders who cared to provide feedback, objections, suggestions, requests. The process for developing this bill followed an exemplary democratic, inclusive, and respectful process. I trust that any additional concerns by legislators and the public can be addressed reasonably and deliberatively and included in revisions.

I also hope that Late testimony will be accepted given that the hearing notice arrived after 5:00pm on Friday of a Superbowl weekend, with offices closed until Monday morning. Thank you for considering this testimony. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to not only a safer and healthier society but a more vibrant one with room for differences and good options.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:03:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair et. al.,

I support HB1328. I have studied both Chinese Medicine and Naturapathic Medicine. The traditional medical system does not work for everyone. Birth is a natural process that works well by itself. It does not need to be limited by the confines of traditional medicine.

I support this bill. I also support less general government involvement. I support capitalism and understand that things that work will promote themselves in a capitalistic society.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:13:05 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jadie Geil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Jadie, and I am a resident of Kapālama. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaua‘i, and multiple

community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Jadie

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:13:22 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keahi Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Native Hawaiian midwives and all midwives in the state, in their mission to provide safe and natural homebirth and care in Hawaii to women and babies.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:17:14 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seanne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:21:38 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ali Grimes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother who was honored to have two healthy homebirths with a midwife almost 2 decades ago, I truly appreciate the great need for women to be able to choose this birthing path. Almost all high-risk pregnancy issues can be pre-detected by midwives and doctors and plan a hospital birth for safety. For women who are healthy and who choose homebirth, Native Hawaiian, or otherwise, those rights need to be protected. My homebirths were safe, easeful and relaxed. I felt empowered as a women, spiritually connected and 100% safe in the care of experienced midwives. I would not have felt comfortable in a medical environment with a medicalized birth. I remember thinking that women have no idea how beautiful a natural birth is until they experience it, and some practitioners of modern medicine are trying to take that away by controlling the natural unpredictable timing of birth. Women are humans and all decisions regardin their bodies and birthing should without question be granted and protected. Mahalo.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:21:55 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra Michels	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:51:38 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maleka Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, relating to midwives. My name is Maleka Cook from Hana, Maui. I had two of my children at home, one in Kaneohe, Oahu and the other last year in Hana, Maui. This measure is very important to me because I come from a remote community with a severe lack of every kind of service. I support the right to choose our birthing practitioners. Please pass HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:00:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328. Expanding access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i is crucial, especially for those who:

- may not be able to afford care in a hospital
- may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment
- may not feel welcome in the health care system.

Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Carla Allison, Honolulu

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:11:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liza sprague	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Liza I am from Waianae and I support HB1328 we have the choice

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:19:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kumeluwaioluopaliuli Tiogangco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT HB 1328: RELATING TO MIDWIFERY

Aloha Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kumeluwaioluopaliuli Tiogangco, and I am a senior at Kamehameha Schools in Ola‘a. I was born and raised in Hilo, Hawai‘i, and was birthed at home in the waters of the pool in my mom’s room. This makes this topic deeply personal to me and strongly connected to my Hawaiian heritage. Today, I share my strong support for HB 1328, which seeks to expand access to licensure and protect traditional and customary birth practices.

As a proud Hawaiian, I believe it is vital to keep our traditions alive, especially in how we welcome new life into our families. HB 1328 is an essential step in ensuring that our traditional birth practices are respected, recognized, and made accessible to all families in Hawai‘i. This is not just about birth—it is about preserving and honoring our culture while strengthening the connection our keiki have to their ancestral roots from the very beginning of life.

By supporting this bill, we are ensuring that families have the right to choose how and where they give birth, allowing them to feel more comfortable, empowered, and connected to their heritage. Cultural birth practices contribute to safer and more meaningful birth experiences, which are critical to the well-being of both mothers and babies. It is our responsibility as a community to make sure that these customs are protected and recognized, so future generations grow up with a deep understanding of their identity and place in our history.

I urge you to support HB 1328 and help pass this legislation in the 2025 session. This is an opportunity to show our commitment to the well-being of our people and the preservation of our cultural traditions. Let us work together to ensure that our Hawaiian practices continue to thrive and that all families have the right to birth in a way that honors their heritage.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kumeluwaioluopaliuli Tiogangco

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:22:22 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcelle Liana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT this bill

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:26:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Maldonado	Hale pihana ka ikena	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:04:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Orozco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328 because I had two wonderful home births, with an incredible midwife, and I want every woman to have the same freedom to choose the birth experience they want to have.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:20:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to protect traditional midwifery in our state.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:24:15 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Alvarado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Yvonne Alvarado Support Bill HB1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:36:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:41:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Abigail Otto, MD	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Abigail Otto, MD, and I am a practicing OBGYN in Honolulu, Oahu testifying in **strong opposition** to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 3 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it. In my short time here, I have cared for mothers who suffered complications from home birth experiences, and have seen **babies die** before arriving to the hospital in these cases as well.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the **necessary qualifications** and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 1328.

Sincerely,

Abigail Otto, MD

University of Hawaii

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:45:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Kuhaulua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support a woman's right to choose their birth team and experience

2/9/25

Aloha Chairs and Members of the Committees on Health and Consumer Protection & Commerce,

I am writing as a private citizen to urge you to pass HB 1328 Relating to Midwives. I have a background in as a health educator in reproductive health, as well as a long professional career that involves issues related to maternal-child health, community development and prevention.

It is imperative that women in Hawai'i have culturally appropriate choice in maternal care. Access to cultural care from traditional birth practitioners and birth attendants is especially important in rural areas, for example throughout Maui County, where access to care is extremely limited. Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander women have unacceptably high rates of pregnancy related mortality, far exceeding the rates for women of other races. Research demonstrates that increasing access to midwifery could significantly reduce both maternal and child deaths. Competing legislation currently under consideration (HB194) further reduces women's reproductive health choices and self determination while simultaneously requiring burdensome licensure requirements that favor practitioners from the continent yet excludes licensure pathways that would be more accessible to traditional birth attendants and cultural practitioners in Hawai'i.

HB 1328 is supported by a wide range of organizations Hawai'i that represent Kanaka Maoli, traditional birth practitioners, home birth attendants, midwifery associations and other respected wisdom keepers. We must listen to these voice and help protect one of the most basic, fundamental processes of humanity – welcoming new life into the world. Unfortunately, our hospital systems and Western medical approaches do not have a good track record when it comes to maternal-child health. Pregnancy and child birth are not necessarily a medical condition, unless there are complications/emergencies. Women have been giving birth for milienia, attended by trusted practitioners and family members. Now more than ever, it is vital to preserve these traditions and ensure access to culturally competent care.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Deb Marois, Makawao, HI

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:06:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Anne Dahilig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Health Committee and Consumer Protection & Commerce Committee,

I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1328. This bill not only ensures that pregnant persons have safe and legal access to care but also protects reproductive choice and self-determination.

Mahalo,

Kelly Anne Dahilig

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:06:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Liljengren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support yjis bill because it is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices.

I do not want goverment control on my medica freedom.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:22:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:26:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer A Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislatures,

I am writing in support of HB 1328 as a Certified Nurse Midwife practicing on Oahu. Hawaii

I am in support of all "licensed midwives " to be able to practice to our highest scope of practice. Hawaii has a diverse population and there are vast rural areas across all islands needing midwifery care.

I am in support for women/birthing persons to choose their birth setting and to be able to have their desired birth attendants present including family and cultural practitioners. I am in support of community birth and appropriate resources for community birth midwives to be able transport safely to the hospital if a higher level of care is needed.

I am in support of multiple pathways for midwives to be able to obtain licensure.

I am in support of Certified Midwives (CMs) to be credentialed and be able to practice in Home, Birth Center and Hospital settings as they are also board certified under the American Midwifery Certification Board, the same board as Certified Nurse Midwives.

I am in support of licensed midwives CM, CPM, CNMs to be able to prescribe and have access to prescription medication and medical devices for intrapartum and postpartum management of labor and hemorrhage. I am also in support of traditional birth attendants to be able to have access to hemorrhage medications.

Respectfull,

Jennifer A Cook DNP, CNM, FACNM, FNPc

Certified Nurse Midwife, Family Nurse Practitioner

Fellow in in the American College of Nurse Midwives

FACNM Region VII Board of Governors Co-Chair

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:28:12 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terry Robinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill 1328. because it is the most comprehensive way to protect birthing choices Terry

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:53:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica McMillan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

As a woman, a mother, a student midwife, and registered voter I urge you to support your birthing community members and vote in favor of bill HB1328.

In my experience birthing 5 children at home under the care of traditional midwives, as a birth photographer documenting the experience of others as a neutral presence, and as a student midwife apprenticing under the supervision of midwives here in Hawaii I have seen first hand the dedicated & competent care they provide.

I have also seen the community of birthing families who wish to be served by midwives from all walks of life continue to grow steadily over the past 30years. This community wants care providers as diverse as they are - people of many colors, religions, cultures, and economics.

For this to happen we must have multiple pathways for our midwives to gain the experience and education needed to serve these communities. If a system is created that forces them to leave the islands to develop the necessary skills we will lose that diversity of care. It will only create barriers to the care demanded by our birthing community.

Your support of HB1328 will allow more people from our local communities to gain competency in midwifery skills without leaving their homes and families here in the islands and without going into financial debt to do so.

Support for HB1328 will unify the birthing communities of mothers, midwives, and medical institutions so they can work effectively together and provide birthing women with the best quality of care no matter what religion or philosophy they adhere to.

Mahalo for your time and consideration!

with Aloha,

Érica McMillan

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:05:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Phelps Nishiguchi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am a Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician practicing in Honolulu. I am a proponent of safe and culturally respectful home birth. However, I have had the experience on many occasions to care for infants who were transferred from midwife home births to the hospital. In some cases, with experienced and properly trained midwives and a properly-timed transfer, the birth was joyous. In others, the outcome was far more devastating. And as a pediatrician specializing in children with disabilities, I see many children with lifelong preventable consequences from birth accidents, which can and do occur unexpectedly in otherwise healthy pregnancies both in and out of the hospital.

I respectfully urge you to **vote NO on HB 1328** because it **endangers public health** by allowing midwives to practice without essential licensure. Leading health organizations, including the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)**, support licensure as a way to ensure midwives are properly trained and accountable.

Without licensure, families may struggle to determine whether a provider meets safety standards, increasing the risk of **preventable complications**. Regulation does not eliminate choice—it ensures **all choices are safe and informed**.

For the well-being of Hawai'i's mothers and babies, I strongly oppose HB 1328 and ask you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erika Phelps Nishiguchi, MD

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:09:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1328 as we should have choices, especially culturally, in giving birth.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:10:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
karin omahony	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please vote yes on HB 1328 to support women and cultural birth practices. HB 1328 ensures locally accessible training and expands vital health care. Native Hawaiian care and care that is already recognized in most states are protected by HB 1328.

Women should be able to make birth choices without fear or criminalization of themselves, their attendants and their 'ohana.

Thank you for your very important "yes" vote on HB 1328

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:10:12 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Halenko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong support for midwives. A midwife helped me bring two healthy babies into this world!
Please please consider

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:31:35 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Trinette Furtado	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members.

Hau`oli Ka Mahina `Ōlelo Hawai`i iā `oe!

`O Trinette Furtado ko`u inoa. Noho mai i Hamakualoa ma Mauinuiakama.

I ask you to SUPPORT HB 1328 that would expand access to birth care for hāpai `ohana and allow birth choices and care that is focused on māmā, pē and `ohana.

This bill is the most comprehensive way this session, to protect birthing choices.

Severely restricting birth practices that have been used for thousands of years to birth children before there was modern medicine and hospitals to one rigid system, denies families the right to choose how they honor and bring a new member of the `ohana into this world.

Those who do not have keiki, who don't intend on having keiki or who no longer can have keiki should not have a stronger right than the brith `ohana, to choose what is best for māmā and pē.

I strongly urge you to protect the choices of birthing `ohana and SUPPORT HB1328.

Mahalo for your time and attention.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:36:49 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Matson	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB 1328. I am currently 13 weeks pregnant with someone else's baby. This is my first time serving as a surrogate and even though I thought I was well-educated about reproductive healthcare, I have learned so much more in the past few months.

I have been pregnant five times before this, with multiple miscarriages, and two healthy and successful homebirth babies. For my last birth I was attended and assisted by 8 people, only one of whom wouldn't have been potentially subject to criminalization under the current laws.

As a person who has and will be soon bringing new life into this world, I am pleading with you to pass this bill to protect my and others rights to bring babies into this world as we have for thousands of years, attended by those of our own choosing.

During my current birth I will be laboring and delivering in the hospital due to the terms of my contract. I willingly signed this contract, even though my preference is to avoid hospitals at almost all costs. I believe that birth is primarily a natural process, and while I am grateful for Western medicine in times of necessity, I do not believe that most healthy, uncomplicated births require any sort of medical intervention. I am well aware that my beliefs are not the current norm. I also firmly believe that every pregnant person deserves the right to choose with whom and how they bring life into this world.

This bill returns some of the autonomy in choice of birthing to the pregnant person and prevents the loss of native and cultural wisdom in our birthing practices.

Please pass this bill and protect the most sacred and important human right, the right of bodily autonomy for those birthing the next generation.

Mahalo,

Shannon M.

Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:40:02 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Willis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:49:16 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Donovan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am absolutely against the criminalization of the midwives in this bill. They are health professionals that are trained to identify high risk pregnancies. They also teach new mothers how to care for their baby. The midwives should be allowed to continue what has been a completely normal Hawaiian custom for generations. It is up to the individual person to decide for themselves. I have relatives that have been midwives in England their entire career. Mostly in rural areas in wales. It is very similar to Hawaii.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:01:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoelani Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom I may concern,

I am in full support of this bill. Take into account the years of history, knowledge and practices that are being clearly erased from systems. It is our responsibility as a state to ensure the safety and security of all people and practices inclusive of the host culture, a cultural practice that has nurtured generations and to ensure the viability of said practices. Let today make the difference for future, to not just support birthing practices but to also ensure the allyship and that choices are still available with safety and security for all...people, places, and cultures.

Sincerely,

Na Kanoelani Davis of Kamiloloa, MolokainuiaHina

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:33:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Lawrence MD	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a practicing board certified OBGYN physician in Hawaii for over 2 decades and oppose this bill. I believe the certification for nurse midwives is of utmost importance to maintain the safety of our moms and keiki and should be held to the highest standards.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:48:51 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoë Willis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:22:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerald Tariao Montano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairs Takayama, Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Matayoshi, Chun, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully urge you to **vote NO on HB 1328** because it **endangers public health** by allowing midwives to practice without essential licensure. Leading health organizations, including the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)**, support licensure as a way to ensure midwives are properly trained and accountable.

Without licensure, families may struggle to determine whether a provider meets safety standards, increasing the risk of **preventable complications**. Regulation does not eliminate choice—it ensures **all choices are safe and informed**.

For the well-being of Hawai‘i’s mothers and babies, I strongly oppose HB 1328 and ask you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Gerald Montano, DO

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:27:30 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grace Alvaro Caligtan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1328. In this time of continuing gaps and disparities in maternal and reproductive health care, options for cultural practices in child birthing must be expanded.

Please stand with the groundswell of community that already supports this measure.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:37:22 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lesha Mathes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Every woman has a right to choose how and where she will give birth. Childbirth is not a disease that requires a doctor or a hospital. Yes, there should be prenatal care but the choice of delivery is up to the mother.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:37:40 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Sweetland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need common sense solutions in these times - and HB1328 is written to offer women a safe alternative in birthing care. Please support this bill. The restrictions for care in another bill, HB 1194 could put women at risk during birth. HB 1328 will protect women in Hawaii and make it possible for midwives to practice without fear of sending birthing mothers to a hospital in the rare instance of a birthing emergency. **We need to ensure that every woman who plans a home birth has access to mid-wife care.** Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:39:30 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sadie Kim	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sadie Kim and I am a practicing Neonatal Hospitalist Physician in Honolulu, Oahu. I am testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 18 years, and I have seen firsthand complications (permanent brain injury, disability, and even death) that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:11:25 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gena Markman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Gena and I am a resident of Kapaa. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Gena Markman

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:27:56 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlene Mersburgh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support expanding access to birth options

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:33:34 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:41:17 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colette Nikki Breaux	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please protect Native Hawaiian Traditional Birthing Practices and Midwifery care for anyone living in the state of Hawaii. I am an OB/GYN Nurse and many pregnant woman living remotely are unable to travel far for prenatal and postnatal care. Experienced friends and relatives should not be penalized for something so natural and acceptable in other states. Please pass House Bill 1328

Colette Nikki Breaux

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:01:15 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicolas Armero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Nicolas Armero, and I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328. This issue is personal for me because my wife wishes to work with a specific midwife, but current restrictions are limiting her access to the care she desires.

H.B. 1328 is critical because it expands the availability of midwifery care by providing more pathways to licensure and protecting the right to choose birth attendants. It also safeguards traditional Native Hawaiian and other cultural birthing practices from unnecessary criminalization, ensuring people in Hawai'i can give birth in ways that align with their values and communities.

This bill addresses the shortage of maternal health care in underserved areas of our state, offering much-needed support to families who may not have access to hospital-based care. It also protects reproductive autonomy and consumer rights while ensuring safe, respectful care.

Please support H.B. 1328 to expand access to vital midwifery services in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,
Nicolas Armero

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:26:36 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa D. Haile	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Melissa D. Haile
Perinatal Community Health Worker & Doula
Kailua, HI
February 9, 2025

Committee on Health
Hawai‘i State Legislature

Re: Strong Support for HB1328 – Relating to Midwifery

Aloha Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melissa D. Haile, and I am a perinatal community health worker and doula serving families throughout Hawai‘i. I am writing in **strong support of HB1328**, which ensures that Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) and other midwives can continue to serve families who choose home birth. This bill is essential for maintaining access to safe, culturally appropriate, and evidence-based maternity care for Hawai‘i families.

As a perinatal community health worker and doula, I have directly witnessed the positive impact of midwifery care on birth outcomes, maternal health, and family well-being. Home birth with skilled midwives provides personalized, family-centered care that improves maternal and infant health while reducing unnecessary medical interventions. This option is especially critical for families in rural areas and those who seek alternatives to hospital-based maternity care.

Restricting access to midwifery services would jeopardize the choices available to birthing families, forcing some to birth without skilled support or travel long distances for care. This disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiian, immigrant, and rural families, further exacerbating health disparities. By supporting HB1328, the Legislature ensures that families have the right to choose safe, legal, and culturally competent birth options.

Additionally, my ability to work and support home birth families depends on the availability of community midwives. Without legislative support for midwifery care, my ability to provide

perinatal education, labor support, and postpartum care would be severely limited, leaving families without the holistic support they need.

My support for this bill is not only professional but deeply personal. I gave birth at home under the care of skilled midwives, and it was an empowering experience that allowed me to birth in a safe, supported, and familiar environment. My midwives provided compassionate, evidence-based care that prioritized both my well-being and my baby's health. Because of their expertise, I was able to have a physiological birth that honored my body's natural process—something that would not have been possible without access to midwifery care. I want this option to remain available for other families who desire the same level of personalized, respectful, and safe maternity care.

I urge you to pass HB1328 to protect birth choices, improve maternal health, and sustain the work of midwives, doulas, and community birth workers like myself. Mahalo for your time and commitment to Hawai'i families.

Respectfully,

Melissa D. Haile
Perinatal Community Health Worker & Doula

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:45:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiley Adolpho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Greetings Chair Takayama, Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in **strong support of HB 1328**, Relating to Midwifery.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.
- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai’i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai’i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
- add any more points here, or you can just erase this.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank you, Kiley Adolpho

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:53:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Young	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1328 as it protects individuals' rights to decide where, how, and with whom they experience pregnancy care. It is crucial that reproductive autonomy is preserved and defended for all people. Giving birth is a sacred and intimate event that the continuance of civilization literally depends on. Those directly involved and impacted should be able to freely choose the circumstances in which they grow life and bring life into the world. Setting up mothers/birthing people and their children for success from the start is beneficial for the community as a whole.

Please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo,

Kristen Young
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:28:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Parker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of

Kayla Parker

Aiea, O'ahu

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a mother of 4 children who has had 2 children in the hospital, one with an obstetrician and the other one with a certified nurse midwife. My youngest two were born at home, with my carefully selected traditional midwives. Choosing a traditional midwife that aligned with us was the only option for my family and I, thankfully at the time we still had the freedom to do so. The level of care that I received from my skilled traditional midwives was unlike anything I had ever experienced in the hospital. Unfortunately, if I were to have another baby, I would be forced to either birth at home alone since my wonderful midwives are now “illegal” in the eyes of the state. We deserve to have access to the care that we choose. Please pass HB 1328.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own ‘ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family’s births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai ‘ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone’s body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.

- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
-

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Thank you,

Kayla Parker



HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:38:47 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiare Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I SUPPORT HB1328

Created by moms, dads, and people who care about PROTECTING BIRTH CHOICES now and in the future. This Bill EXPANDS ACCESS to birth care, allowing families to have UNRESTRICTED BIRTH CHOICES and greater maternal and infant care. It protects those in rural areas and traditional, cultural, and religious birth workers.

Mahalo,

Tiare Smith

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:20:55 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. It gives women choices on access to birth care. Please support this.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:27:29 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasa mcdonald	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Stop infringing on our cultural rights.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:13:52 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David E Shormann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill expands access to birth care for ALL Hawaiians, that's good!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:20:16 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Chang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ann Chang, and I am a practicing OB/GYN in Honolulu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 20 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:36:42 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My body my choice and the same for everyone else

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:08:51 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jerome Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr Jerome Lee, and I am a practicing pediatrician in Honolulu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for over 20 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:18:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deven English	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:46:37 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sally Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Parents have the right to choose how they birth. We have bodily autonomy. This bill is in the best interest of the people in Hawaii to have freedoms while birthing their babies whether it be at home in the hospital whatever it is the parents are allowed to make their own decisions that is God-given, right.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:49:23 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mari Grief	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I **strongly oppose HB 1328** because it undermines the safety of pregnant individuals and newborns by removing essential licensing requirements for midwives. The Hawai‘i State Auditor has recommended full licensure to ensure midwives meet professional standards, and leading organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) support regulated, evidence-based midwifery care.

Without proper licensure, families may struggle to distinguish between qualified and unqualified providers, increasing the risk of poor outcomes. Regulation does not restrict choice—it ensures that all midwives are trained, accountable, and equipped to provide safe care.

For the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s mothers and babies, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mari Grief, MD

Pediatric Hospitalist

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:49:46 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raul Nohea Goodness	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1328 , the bill to support traditional / native birthing and midwifery practices.

It adds training and expands care. Traditional cultural and familial practice of birthing should no be criminalized. This bill supports families, and doesn't isolate them.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:58:50 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arlene Kiyohara	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I strongly oppose HB 1328 because it undermines the safety of pregnant individuals and newborns by removing essential licensing requirements for midwives. The Hawai‘i State Auditor has recommended full licensure to ensure midwives meet professional standards, and leading organizations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) support regulated, evidence-based midwifery care.

Without proper licensure, families may struggle to distinguish between qualified and unqualified providers, increasing the risk of poor outcomes. Regulation does not restrict choice—it ensures that all midwives are trained, accountable, and equipped to provide safe care.

For the health and safety of Hawai‘i’s mothers and babies, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1328.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Arlene Parubrur Kiyohara, MD

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun,
and Committee Members,

My name is Alana Siaris, and I am a resident of Aiea, O'ahu. I am testifying **in support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. **H.B. 1328** expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practice without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization

- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. **H.B. 1328** addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and practices that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health. As a woman that has had a homebirth with zero complications, my greatest fear was that I would be forced to labor and birth my child in a medical hospital setting, which does not administer culturally responsive care to the mother, newborn, and 'ohana involved.

Throughout my pregnancy I was faced with shame and stigma from my OBGYN who told me that she would no longer care for me if a homebirth is what I wanted. Birthworkers (midwives and doulas) that I sought for advice cared for me in confidence and with trust, as they made known the risks we were taking because of the laws currently in place here in Hawai'i.

I come from a 'ohana of women who have experienced traumatic births in the hospital setting, but for me, having a homebirth has been the most natural and sacred experience, and the best decision that my family has ever made. Every woman should be able to experience the sovereignty in birthing where and with whom she chooses.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but **H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections** and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i, and **oppose H.B. 1194** which is restrictive and discriminating.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Alana Siaris

Brieanah Gouveia
Honolulu, HI 96822
February 10, 2025

Committee on Health
Hawai'i State Legislature
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B.1328 – RELATING TO MIDWIFERY

Dear Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for **H.B.1328**, a bill that will protect reproductive autonomy and expand access to midwifery care in Hawai'i. This legislation is essential for ensuring the rights of pregnant individuals to choose their birth attendants and place of birth while preserving traditional and cultural birthing practices that have been integral to our communities for generations.

Midwifery is an ancient practice of human civilization that must be protected and perpetuated. With the impending expiration of the current Midwifery Licensure law (H.R.S. 457J) on June 30, 2025, now is the time to enact a framework that both supports professional midwifery practice and upholds the rights of Native Hawaiian traditional birth practitioners and other cultural and religious birthing customs without the threat, fear, and stigma of criminalization.

H.B.1328 will:

- **Protect Reproductive Autonomy:** Every individual has the right to make informed choices about their pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care. This bill ensures that families can choose the birth attendants and settings that best align with their personal, cultural, and spiritual values.
- **Expand Access to Midwifery Care:** Recognizing multiple pathways to Certified Professional Midwifery licensure, this bill removes unnecessary barriers to practice, allowing midwives trained through apprenticeship, the Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP), and North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) certification to be licensed.
- **Support Licensed Midwives in Practicing to Their Full Scope:** Midwives should be empowered to provide care in accordance with their training and experience—as modern day wisdom bearers of an essential, ancient service—to ensure that more families have access to safe and competent midwifery care.
- **Preserve Native Hawaiian Birthing Traditions:** This bill affirms and protects Native Hawaiian customary birthing practices, ensuring that cultural knowledge and traditional birth attendants can continue their invaluable work without fear of prosecution.
- **Respect Other Cultural and Religious Birthing Practices:** Families from diverse backgrounds should not have to choose between cultural integrity and legality. This bill acknowledges and safeguards traditional birth attendants who provide care consistent with cultural and religious traditions.

- **Provide Exemptions for Traditional Birth Attendants:** Recognizing that not all birth attendants seek or can afford business licensure and certification, this bill establishes clear exemptions for traditional and indigenous birth attendants, provided they meet specific requirements that maintain community safety and autonomy.

Midwifery is an ancient human practice that has supported healthy birth outcomes for millennia. Hawai‘i must join other states in embracing a licensure framework that acknowledges diverse midwifery pathways, respects indigenous and cultural traditions, and ensures all families have access to skilled birth attendants without fear of legal repercussions.

For these reasons, **I urge you to pass H.B.1328** and ensure the continuation of safe, culturally competent, and accessible midwifery care in Hawai‘i. Mahalo nui your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Brieanah Gouveia

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:13:56 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support this bill. It was created by families who support safe birth and birth choices now and in the future. It expands access to birth care allowing unrestricted birth choices and greater infant and maternal care. It protects those in rural areas and traditional, cultural and religious birth workers

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:59:21 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Latai Soakai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Latai, and I am a resident of Kaneohe. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly

harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system. I personally know someone that has experienced this and hope to not subject myself to this in the future.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i!

Mahalo for your consideration,

Latai Soakai

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:59:45 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Haley Callahan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Haley Rabago Callahan from Keokea, Maui. I come from a lineage of Puerto Rican birthkeepers and have been practicing birthwork on Maui for twelve years. I was also a student at a MEAC-accredited college, working toward my midwifery degree, until I decided it was not possible to have a family, support my community, and complete the necessary education to become a midwife through that pathway.

I full-heartedly SUPPORT HB1328, 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.

HB1328 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 previous 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 received was valuable--it did not correlate with the world in which I practice 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-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:02:55 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Piper Lovemore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Piper Lovemore and I am proud to stand in support of this HB1328 today.

This bill was born of brilliant and careful compromise, respectful collaboration, and years, and for a number of our keiki- lifetimes, of effort.

While I personally reject the notion of having to publically proclaim my rights to something as private and personal as my particular choices when giving birth, I have profound gratitude for those who will stand with me to protect my sovereignty. Such is the case with this bill, as midwives, mothers and others have rallied together for a decade and a half to protect tools and perspectives many don't yet know they need. They've had the foresight to protect pathways overgrown with neglect, knowing that when the superhighways of profit and convenience begin to back up and break down, alternative solutions will be sought and resurrected. This is a proven pitfall of evolving humanity.

Most will relate to revisiting the wisdom offered by a mother figure, after venturing toward some other goal and recognizing one's own sense of direction to have been flawed. Oh how we value that insight in retrospect! And how fortunate we find ourselves to have a reference to return to. American maternity care is currently in the position of that wayward child, to the point of deadly consequence. Imagine the legislature in Hawaii choosing to then cut off access to eventual self-reflective reparation. What a tragedy that would be.

I implore those on the floor today to do right by your progeny and ours. Vote in support of HB1328!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:04:19 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Bowen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a new mother and recipient of both midwife and hospital support during my pregnancy and delivery, I support HB1328 with my whole chest. We need more options of care for pregnant women, not less. Criminalizing midwifery in any aspect is only going to create more of a divide by increasing mistrust of the medical establishment to those of us who have already experienced discrimination and abuse in formal healthcare environments.

As a low income Hispanic woman on state insurance, I can tell you that my mistrust of the medical establishment stems from mistrust of the medical industrial complex. If you're on state insurance, these doctors just see \$\$ signs, they'll push you for a C section at THEIR earliest convenience. They'll push you for medications and surgeries you don't need. With a midwife I felt like I had someone on my side to help me navigate what was really important.

I spent 9 months building trust with my midwife as she helped me build my baby, and on day 4 of labor when she looked me in the eyes and said "it's time to go to the hospital" I went to the hospital. Because I trusted my midwife, not because I trusted the hospital. When we arrived at the hospital, we experienced hostility and discrimination for trying to have a home birth, even though we came to the hospital when it became unsafe to continue at home.

In the end the hospital forced a separation with my newborn son for 24 hours to fly him to the NICU on Oahu, which he did not need. He was breathing well and stable when they flew him, but they convinced me it was for the best. The whole thing cost more than \$35K of taxpayer money in insurance, and so much unnecessary suffering for my family. For nothing. Why should I want to go back to the hospital for the next baby? Why should I tell any other expectant mom to go to the underfunded and ill equipped Maui Memorial?

Voting YES on HB1328 (and NO on HB1194) is a step in the right direction for improving the public trust in our medical system. Mahalo nui.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:05:11 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
stacy diaz (zoom display name SD)	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I, Stacy Diaz support bill 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:14:25 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Theresa-Ann Kahili	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Theresa Kekawa-Kahili, and I am a resident of Nānākuli, O'ahu. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery. The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system. There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health. There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Theresa Kekawa-Kahili

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:44:10 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Puanani Kanealii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

My name is Puanani Kekaula Kāneali‘i, a mother of six, and I am in full support of HB1328 which prioritizes the rights and needs of birthing women outside of the scope of Western medicine that has been forced upon the people of Hawai‘i by way of colonization and an othering of what is our intrinsic cultural practices.

As a hāpai woman, I always knew it was my choice in how it was that I brought my children into the world. Birthing is a life-giving act that cannot and should not be dictated at any level of government. As Kānaka ‘Ōiwi (Hawaiians), we have seen our language and cultural practices be a subject in government offices and up for public opinion. We are still moving forward in undoing the harm in Hawai‘i. E ‘olu‘olu ‘oe, please stand for mothers of all of Hawai‘i in support of HB1328.

Mahalo nui,

Puanani Kānelai‘i

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:44:16 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lyndsay Long	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dr. Lyndsay Long, and I am a practicing neonatology in Honolulu, Oahu testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 2 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:00:55 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
K Mantanona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of

Keeley Mantanona

Kapolei, Hawaii

Committee on Health

Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair

Rep. Terez Amato, Rep. Cory M. Chun, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Ikaika Olds,

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Diamond Garcia

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Rep. Sam Satoru Kong,

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Rep. Lisa Marten, Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Rep. Elijah Pierick

Aloha Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am a native Hawaiian mama of soon to be 4. I have had midwives and homebirths for each of my keiki and am currently enrolled in a mentorship program to become a ko'okua. My plans for the future are to be a midwife to help support our native Hawaiian mothers and those of pasifika

descent. Midwifery has helped me birth my keiki in a way that is natural to my customs and culture, allowing me to be able to birth as intended by my ancestors and as nature intended. During my mentorship, I am learning more about cultural birth practices that are not common knowledge for kanaka maoli across the pae aina which is a devastating realization. I hope for a future where my native Hawaiian keiki can practice their cultural protocols for birth without having to risk practicing in an unsafe way or risk compromising their cultural norms for birthing on their native land.

This measure is very important to me, because:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.
- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.
- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.
- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.
- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.

- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.
- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.
- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.
-

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Aloha,

Keeley Mantanona



HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:05:05 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ediana Sallee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, I'm writing in support of HB1328. Hawaii needs to protect birth right choices and parental rights for families! Midwives provide safe birthing environments and healthy baby care. I've had 4 midwife assisted births, 3 of which were in a hospital setting. Midwives are amazing and essential for women's health!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:09:04 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maile Garrett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Maile Garrett and I am a resident of Kaaawa, O‘ahu where I have safely given birth at home to my two healthy children. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai‘i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai‘i by doing the following:

- o Supports a pregnant person’s right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- o Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- o Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- o Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- o Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- o Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person’s choosing, including traditional practices of that person’s culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai‘i’s maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Maile Garrett

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:11:46 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah-Lyn Lokelani Jacobson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT THIS BILL. THIS BILL EXPANDS ACCESS TO BIRTH CARE ALLOWING FAMILIES TO HAVE UNRESTRICTED BIRTH CHOICES.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:14:07 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenny Miyachi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing to share my strong support for HB1328. This bill is *so* important for improving birth care access and giving families real choices about how they bring their little ones into the world. I can't tell you how many times I've heard horror stories from my friends about their birth experiences – feeling unheard, pressured into things they weren't comfortable with, and just generally not treated with the respect and care they deserved. It's like they were on a conveyor belt, not experiencing one of the most significant moments of their lives.

HB1328 is a game-changer. It's about empowering families to make the birth choices that are right for *them*. Whether that's a hospital birth, a birth center, or a home birth with a midwife, everyone should have access to the kind of care that makes them feel safe and supported. This bill also protects access to traditional, cultural, and religious birth workers, which is HUGE, especially for those in rural areas where options are already limited. We need to honor and support all kinds of birth experiences.

Seriously, this isn't just a bill, it's about respecting women and families. It's about better maternal and infant care. It's about making sure everyone has the chance to experience childbirth in a positive and empowering way. Please support HB1328 – it's time for a real change!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:41:50 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Gibu	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Christopher, and I am a practicing Neonatologist in Honolulu, testifying in strong opposition to the HB1328 which proposes to allow broad exemptions for licensure for midwives. As someone who is deeply committed to public safety and the well-being of families, I urge you to reconsider the potential consequences of this bill. I have practiced in Hawaii for 8.5 years, and I have seen firsthand complications that could have been prevented if the person taking care of this patient had recognized it.

The fact of the matter is that midwifery practice has serious health implications, sometimes life and death, on both the mother and child. Allowing exemptions allows for loopholes for potentially fatal complications by individuals practicing either with a lack of standardized experience or knowledge. Ignorance and stupidity are not appropriate excuses for endangering the lives of both a mother and a child. Literally all other individuals involved in health care are held to nationalized, evidence-based standards and metrics, and there should be no exceptions when dealing with the health and safety of others, in particular, our most vulnerable population of infants.

Licensure standards for midwives exist to ensure that individuals providing care during pregnancy and labor have met the necessary qualifications and have received proper education and training. By allowing broad exemptions, we are undermining the very foundation of patient protection and potentially putting mothers and babies at risk.

I urge you to vote no on HB 1328.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:05:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariana Loaiza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a birthing woman on the islands of Hawai'i. I am in full support of H.B. 1328, I want balance and protection of rights for the women in Hawai'i. We want full protection of traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization. We will have birth attendants be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:43:17 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shani Hough	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i support Bill HB1328 created by parents and people who care about protecting birth choices now and in the future. The Bill expands access to birth care, allowing families to have unrestricted birth choices and greater maternal and infant care. It protects those in rural areas and traditional, cultural and religious birth workers!

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:53:13 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aja Grande	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

My name is Aja, and I am a resident of Kaimuki. I am testifying in support of H.B. 1328, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B.

1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i by doing the following:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
- Protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital,

may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not feel welcome in the health care system.

There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust reproductive autonomy protections and has gained the support of OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, Kaua'i, and multiple community organizations. Please support H.B. 1328 to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Aja

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:14:33 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ananda Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB1328. Both of my children were born through natural child birth. My mother was a midwife and practiced for over 15 years. I would like the protection of rights for others to do the same.

Thank you,

Ananda Stone

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:20:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaliko Amona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1328 and families' choices of who supports them in their pregnancies and births.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:30:05 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Nichols	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1328, which aims to protect and expand the rights of individuals to choose their pregnancy care providers and settings. This bill is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, HB1328 ensures that expectant mothers have the autonomy to decide how, where, and with whom they receive care during pregnancy, which is fundamental to respecting individual rights and promoting health outcomes based on personal comfort and choice. Secondly, by recognizing and supporting midwifery, the bill acknowledges the significant role midwives play in providing holistic, personalized care, potentially leading to lower intervention rates and better maternal and neonatal health outcomes. Additionally, expanding the scope of practice for midwives can help address disparities in maternal health care, especially in rural or underserved areas of Hawaii where access to traditional medical facilities might be limited. Lastly, given Hawaii's diverse population, this bill supports culturally appropriate care, which can be vital for many families, contributing to overall community health and well-being. I urge you to support the passage of HB1328 as it represents a step forward in our state's commitment to maternal health, choice, and equity in healthcare. Thank you for considering this important legislation.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:43:57 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Sarasa	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Takayama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Keohokapu-Lee Loy and Chun, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in **support of H.B. 1328**, relating to midwifery.

The Hawai'i State Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy, including where and with whom to experience pregnancy and birth care. H.B. 1328 expands access to midwifery licensure, and maternal health care in Hawai'i because it:

- Supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants and place of birth and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience
- Allows licensed midwives to practice to the full extent of their credentials, training, and experience
- Expands access to midwifery care by including a nationally recognized apprenticeship pathway used in 27 states and Washington D.C. as a pathway to licensure
- Balances reproductive rights and consumer protections
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- Protects other religious and cultural birthing practices without the threat or fear of criminalization
- Allows traditional birth attendants to be exempt from midwifery licensure provided they comply with specific disclosure requirements established by the Dept. of Commerce & Consumer Affairs

Access to culturally responsive care of the birthing person's choosing, including traditional practices of that person's culture, is strongly correlated with increased safety and well-being. H.B. 1328 addresses Hawai'i's maternal healthcare shortages and deserts that are truly harming our families, especially those who may not be able to afford care in a hospital, may not have access to transportation or childcare that would allow them to attend an appointment, or may not

feel welcome in the health care system. There is a lack of evidence to support the claim that traditional midwifery and home births worsen outcomes for maternal and child health.

There are multiple midwifery bills before your committee, but H.B. 1328 offers the most robust protections and has gained the support of multiple community organizations, including OHA, the ACLU of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Home Birth Collective, Ea Hānau, and the Counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i, to name a few. Please **support H.B. 1328** to ensure protection for reproductive freedom in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Emily Sarasa, Ka'akako

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:44:46 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mayson P Asano Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill. Thank you

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:50:01 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Poulos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I support this bill regarding mid-wifery, creating a safe option for mothers who chose births other than in a hospital.

Mahalo,

Lisa Poulos

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:06:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Palos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:14:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Shiozaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Takayama, ChairMatayoshi, Vice Chairs and all members.

I am writing today in strong support of HB 1328, Relating to Midwifery.

I am full spectrum birth worker. I helped support my sister when she gave birth to her first. I am a strong advocate for community, and being around and supporting growing families, as an early childhood educator and trained birthworker, I see how important having a healthy, supportive birthing experience is for the birthing person, the baby and the whole 'ohana.

I align with this measure because of all the following points:

- It comes from the community. Many people, including many kinds of midwives, cultural practitioners, lawyers, and organizations worked together to ensure that this is a comprehensive bill that really works for all types of practice, and allows everyone to work together. The community has strongly requested this measure very clearly.
- There is no evidence that restricting any type of midwives makes anyone safer. It only forces practices underground, which is not safe.
- The real safety hazard I am concerned about is lack of access to care. Many people do not have access at all because of where they live. This was especially clear after the Lahaina wildfires, when many pregnant people came to fire relief hubs for care that they could not access even before the fires. Much of this care was provided by traditional midwives who had been criminalized. Many young Lahaina women and men became student midwives at this time. They are the hope for the future of maternal and infant health.
- Another real safety hazard is hospital transports being dangerously interfered with. If they are not legal, midwives not being able to communicate with doctors if they need to take someone to the hospital is a serious concern. Parents are also sometimes more reluctant to go to the hospital at all, because CWS or other enforcement might fault them for giving birth with an unlicensed midwife.

- Hawaiian cultural practices are extremely important and should be protected. We are losing vast knowledge every time a kupuna birth practitioner dies, and if they and their students cannot practice, they cannot pass that knowledge on while they are alive.

- Cultural birth practices are a human right. This is true for every culture, and the degree to which this right is respected and supported in a society affects maternal mortality. Real people die due to lack of culturally aligned care.

- It protects families. The existing law, and other proposed measures criminalize extended family members who attend births within their own 'ōhana. Grandparents and aunts are currently in danger for attending their family's births, and hānai family, even very close hānai family such as hānai parents, are not legal to attend births of their hānai 'ōhana. There has been NO evidence, despite centuries of practice, that these extended family practices are dangerous in any way.

- It protects reproductive choice. The ability to choose who touches a birthing person during birth is important, in the same way that consent is important for all choices about who touches someone's body. It is not okay to restrict this choice.

- Gives a realistic way for local clinical midwives to be licensed. Right now, 97% of licensed midwives are not originally from Hawai'i and none are Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian). This is because licensure requires MEAC schooling, which is based on the US Continent. This is a problem because it reduces access to cultural care and can change the culture of birth in Hawai'i by displacing local practices. There are many young local people studying under clinical midwives (midwives whose practice is based on modern tools, techniques and terminology, who may also use traditional methods in their practice — these are different from traditional practitioners but also very important for cultural support). A PEP pathway to licensure would allow these local students to count the births they attend with their teachers toward a license, so that they can eventually serve their communities as professional midwives. Without a PEP pathway, all of this experience does not count. This is discriminatory against local people, and really not fair.

- Supports medicaid reimbursement for licensed midwives, which would help lower income birthing families greatly.

- Supports the full scope of practice for CMs and CPMs, which will allow them access to more tools, including some that are important for safety, to help the families they serve.

- Pregnant people and their 'Ohana need more support, not less. The statistics on Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders' access to care is very low, and maternal/infant mortality is way higher than whites families. Many families live far from care as well, with no exception where I live, with traffic and weather conditions frequently obstacles to care. Birthing itself is natural and many births will not require hospitalization with adequate support.

For all of these reasons and more, I request that you please pass HB 1328.

Mahalo Nui,

Allison N. Shiozaki

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:36:48 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT this bill as it offers and clarifies an excellent foundation and requirements to ensure the provision of health care for mothers and children on a geographically isolated island state.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:44:36 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly oppose this bill HB 1194 as its provisions attack on the Hawaiian Culture and my people.

Mahalo,

Kristina Mau

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:54:50 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chanara Casey Richmond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Greatly needed. Mahalo. Chanara Richmond HD42

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:01:32 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Jaramillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strongest support of SB1328. This type of birth is a necessary choice. More gentle and peaceful than a hospital. If I were to give birth, it would definitely be my decision. I know mothers that have experienced this and have only heard great things. Please pass this bill.

Me ka ha'a ha'a

Mahalo!

Lisa Jaramillo

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:49:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
elizabeth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a graduate of UH Manoa with an degree in anthropology (focus on culture & environment).... I am also a mother of two hapa Hawaiian babies, who were blessed to be born in the safety and comfort of their grandparents' home with the support of my Midwives & 'Ohana. I went to school for classes and training to be a Doula and from past experiences, personally, with reproductive rights and how the western medical system is oftentimes NOT a comfortable or safe place for women (especially women & children of color!), I am in support of women being able to choose to birth where they are comfortable and protected (with voices heard and rights respected). Cultural determination is a right that every indigenous person should have, especially in their homelands! Stay out of areas that are not in your jurisdiction... A woman is a sacred portal to birth new life. This is a vitally important experience (that shapes each of us) that has no place in politics! No one should be determining where a woman may birth, except for her. Please protect the rights of all of us, especially Hawaiian women who choose to birth in a culturally-traditional manner. Mahalo nui loa for your time & consideration.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:58:29 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Bosman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Protect birthing choices! Every woman has the right to choose and this bill allows for that! It protects traditions and customs which some hold dear. A woman has the innate ability to choose what is best for her baby if midwifery and native practices are that they should be able to have that experience. Protect reproductive freedoms and bodily autonomy.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:08:52 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james wallace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1328.Is it the mothers choice?They can say My Body My Choice.That slogan works for the abortion lovers so it should work for the moms.

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:47:48 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dayna Matsumura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-1328

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:11:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/10/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jadelynn Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Jadelynn Davis. I am a 2nd grade teacher part of the Hawaii Department of Education, I am a secretary of the USATF Hawaii Association, I am a single mother, and I have two daughters. I am submitting my support for bill HB1328 as it protects the cultural practices of this land without any threat or fear of criminalization. Bill HB1328 supports a pregnant person's right to choose their birth attendants, a place of birth, and to involve those they identify as family and support in the birthing experience. HB1328 balances reproductive rights and consumer protections. Please consider my testimony and those who are in support of this bill.