



Memorandum

To: Members of the Senate Health Policy Committee

From: Gilda Z. Jacobs, President/CEO, Michigan League for Public Policy

Date: November 29, 2016

Re: Support for House Bill 4598

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I am writing to indicate the Michigan League for Public Policy's support for House Bill 4598 to provide licensure for Certified Professional Midwives.

Women have always given birth out of the hospital and will continue to do so, but this has become a more critical issue with diminishing access to in-hospital obstetric care in many parts of our state. There are currently 18 contiguous counties in mid- and lower-northern Michigan without a practicing OB/GYN. Ensuring that women can safely give birth outside of the hospital is essential.

The state has a responsibility to ensure that providers attending to births outside of the hospital setting are held to a high standard. Licensure is a means of doing that. Currently, 28 states have licensure for Certified Professional Midwives.

Studies have shown that babies born to women under the care of Certified Professional Midwives experience significantly reduced rates of preterm birth and low birthweight. This is important as they are primary factors contributing to infant mortality.

We urge your support of HB 4598 to allow for the licensure of Certified Professional Midwives.