



November 13, 2024

**Re: Support of House Bill 5636 (Licensure for Birth Centers) / Hearing 11/14/2024**

Dear House Health Policy Committee Chair Rogers; Majority Vice Chair Whitsett; Minority Vice Chair VanderWall; and Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of Michigan House Bill 5636 (Pohutsky), establishing licensure for Michigan's [freestanding] birth centers.

The American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) is the professional association for birth center owners, and the midwives, nurses, physicians, administrative staff, and others who work in and for birth centers.

Extensive research on the safety and outcomes of birth centers exists, beginning in 1989 with an article analyzing data from 18,000 birth center births, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

More recently, the [Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns Initiative](#) (2013-2017) found *lower* rates of preterm birth, low birth weight, infant mortality, and maternal mortality and *higher* rates of breastfeeding and vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC), along with health care cost savings of \$2,000 per mother/baby dad in the first year of life, for families participating with Medicaid and/or CHIP and receiving birth center care.

The Strong Start Initiative additionally found that birth center care led to equal success rates for VBAC by race, and that the experience of care was the same for Black and white patients.

By passing HB 5636, Michigan will join the 41 other U.S. states which license birth centers (39 states) or in some other way regulate (2 states) birth centers. In states that license birth centers, insurance reimbursement is available.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Trinisha Williams', enclosed within a circular loop.

Trinisha Williams, MPH, CM, LCCE, CLC  
President, American Association of Birth Centers