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HB 1067- Doula Technical Advisory Group
Hearing of the House Health and Government Operations
Committee

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Testimony in Support

I have been performing birth work since the fall of 2016. Upon relocating to northern Virginia, and later to Maryland (currently residing in Prince George's County), the majority of my doula clients have been Maryland residents and women of color, and more specifically Black women. My clients know, upon agreeing to work with me, that my services are an out-of-pocket expense for them. All of them see the value in having a birth companion who not only provides personal and physical support throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, but also, advocacy ensuring that their voices are heard and birth plans adhered to, especially in cases of healthy, low-risk, uncomplicated pregnancy. However, the cost is a barrier for some, and I have made it a common practice to drastically reduce my rate, offer a sliding scale, suggest payment plans, and even work for free in cases of extreme financial hardship.

It is well documented that doulas contribute to positive birth outcomes for mothers and their babies. Every woman, regardless of her socioeconomic status, deserves a doula and ethical delivery of care that is free of bias. Approval of House Bill 1067, and forming an advisory group committed to this cause, will positively impact accessibility, and allow doulas such as myself to be of service to more

women and families. I testify in favor of House Bill 1067, thank Delegate Wilkins for her dedication to maternal and child health in the state of Maryland, and appreciate the Committee giving attention to this matter.