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Ways and Means Committee

Education Subcommittee

House Chair
Baltimore City Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1067 Doula Technical Assistance Advisory Group Certification

Good afternoon Chairwoman Pendergrass and Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk,

I request a favorable report on HB 1067 because we must create policy frameworks to improve the maternal mortality outcomes for vulnerable Marylanders. I know personally how critical it is to have qualified and culturally competent birth workers providing support to women of color and other groups with maternal mortality health disparities.

Doulas provide critical support to mothers during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum healing. As the mother of two young sons, I do not know how I would have been able to have safe and successful deliveries without an excellent birth team that included a trained doula. Doulas provide emotional support, advice, and help you navigate the intimidating health delivery system. Access to doulas is often limited for low-income mothers who could gain improved health outcomes.

This bill begins to outline a policy and accreditation framework for community doulas who provide intense support to women who need the support the most. Becoming eligible for Medicaid reimbursement is an important first step to expanding doula access to improve Maryland's maternal mortality and health outcomes.

I request a favorable report for HB 1067.

Sincerely,

Delegate Stephanie Smith