



HOME BIRTH MIDWIVES BILL GAINS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

HB 522 WILL ALLOW NORTH CAROLINA TO JOIN EVERY SURROUNDING STATE IN LICENSING CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIVES

RALEIGH, NC (March 30, 2011) – Members of the North Carolina General Assembly are crossing the political aisle to support consumers who want legalized access to Certified Professional Midwives. [HB 522, an Act to License Certified Professional Midwives in North Carolina](#), was introduced today after being filed Tuesday by Rep. Pat Hurley (R – Randolph), Rep. Becky Carney (D – Mecklenburg), Rep. William Current (R – Gaston) and Rep. Winkie Wilkins (D – Durham, Person).

Unlike Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina, North Carolina denies childbearing women access to legally practicing Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), who are specially trained as experts in home-based maternity care. Because North Carolina does not license CPMs, they remain open to criminal prosecution for unlicensed health care practice, despite the fact that they are the primary care providers for women all across the United States who deliver their babies in private homes and freestanding birth centers.

CPMs are legally recognized in 27 states, but North Carolina is one of a handful of states that explicitly prohibit their practice. “Our state is poised to move from being the worst state in the Southeast to one of the best in the nation for women who choose midwifery care and the home setting for birth,” said Russ Fawcett, Legislative Chair of the North Carolina Friends of Midwives (NCFOM). When the CPM legislation is enacted, North Carolina will;

- Triple its workforce of midwives providing services to the ever growing number of consumers choosing home birth;
- Reduce Medicaid costs; and
- Provide access to care for hundreds of NC home birthing families who currently have no access to legal care providers.

“North Carolina is admired around the country for the strength and leadership of its grassroots organization,” said Katie Prown, PhD, Campaign Manager of The Big Push for Midwives Campaign. “Leaders in both parties agree that mothers who choose midwifery care and the home setting for birth must be supported.”

In 2007 a legislative study was recommended to assess the needs of childbearing women who choose home birth. The House Select Committee on Licensing Midwives was conducted in 2008. While the North Carolina Medical Society voiced their opposition to the home setting for birth, the arguments in favor of licensing and regulation were overwhelming and the final report recommended the stakeholders form a working group and propose a licensing methodology. This recommendation was included in the 2009 Study Act. From Fall 2009, until May 2010, the stakeholders met with the Midwifery Joint Committee. The NC Medical Society simply reiterated their objections to the home setting for birth and, finally, in May, the Midwifery Joint Committee concluded they could not meet the request of the General Assembly.

“We were disappointed that the Medical Society refused to work with NCFOM unlike Idaho in 2009 and Wyoming in 2010,” said Russ Fawcett. “Instead of a working group, these meetings were more like hearings where testimony was given. It is not defensible for the Medical Society to favor a least safe environment for these families who have every right to make the decision to give birth at home. We are quite prepared to proceed down the legislative pathway, and we fully intend to manage our house.”

[North Carolina Friends of Midwives](#) is a grassroots organization of advocates dedicated to promoting, supporting, and protecting access to midwifery care in North Carolina.

LINKS:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2011/Bills/House/PDF/H522v0.pdf>

<http://www.ncfom.org/>

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