May 12, 2021

Senator Ben Ray Lujan
498 Russell Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senator Ben Ray Lujan:

We the undersigned support the BABIES Act that you are seeking to introduce in the 117th Congress. The bill would "establish a Medicaid demonstration program to develop and advance innovative payment models for freestanding birth center services for women with a low-risk pregnancy, and for other purposes."

Women of color, particularly African American women, Native American women, and women of lower socioeconomic status, including women living in rural and inner-city areas, experience disparities during and after childbirth with higher rates of poor outcomes for both mothers and infants. Rates for maternal mortality and morbidity, infant mortality, preterm and low birth weight births are all significantly higher among vulnerable populations. The birth center model of midwifery-led care has been shown through the Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns evaluation to improve outcomes for mothers and infants, lowering preterm birth, low birth weight, and cesarean births. Increasing access for more women will lead to better health.

If passed, the BABIES Act would set up demonstration model Birth and Health Centers that would be established in 6 states. The demonstration would consist of implementing prospective payment systems for cost-based reimbursement for care provided in these Birth and Health Centers. The demonstration also will include in-depth evaluation of the centers, their outcomes, and costs to Medicaid. The goal will be to provide access to high quality midwifery-led care to more women who currently lack this care.

The need for access to high quality midwifery care for more women of color and lower income populations has been well established. Supporting the addition of more birth centers that can provide access to maternity care and other healthcare services, with appropriate referral to medical care as needed, is a step in the right
direction to improve the health of our more vulnerable populations. We thank you for your bipartisan leadership on this bill.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Birth Centers
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Medical Student Association
American Public Health Association
Ancient Song Doula Services
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Ariadne Labs
Black Mamas Matter Alliance
Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers
DONA International
Every Mother Counts
Futures Without Violence
Improving Birth
Jewish Healthcare Foundation
Lamaze International
March for Moms
Midwives Alliance of North America
Mom Congress
MomsRising
National Association of Certified Professional Midwives
National Health Law Program
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Rural Health Association
Our Bodies Ourselves
Sisters in Birth
Women and Girls Foundation
Women’s Law Project
VBAC Facts