

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 117<sup>th</sup> 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