

Members of the Kentucky General Assembly
702 Capital Avenue
Frankfort KY 40601

March 5, 2024

Dear Members of the Kentucky General Assembly,

I am writing today in support of HB199 and SB103 relating to freestanding birth centers in Kentucky. I am an obstetrician practicing in Lexington, KY. I have been in practice for 22 years.

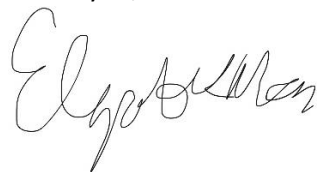
While a resident in Indiana, I had the pleasure of collaborating with a freestanding birth center in Indianapolis. The birth center was located twenty minutes away from our hospital. They cared for low-risk women with a singleton gestation and transferred their patients to our hospital when they required a higher level of care. This birth center offered women an opportunity to have a birth experience similar to a home birth, and with the ability to be transferred quickly to a hospital if they required a high level of care. I found our birth center to be an excellent option for the low-risk women in our community and it allowed our hospital to focus on women with more complicated pregnancies.

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG), of which I am a member, recognizes accredited freestanding birth centers in its Levels of Maternal Care. The ACOG document states that accredited birth centers, "are an integral part of many regionalized care systems." Unfortunately, freestanding birth centers are not currently part of the care available in Kentucky.

HB199 and SB103 will remove the artificial barrier of the Certificate of Need requirement, which is currently a hindrance to opening a birth center in our state. Furthermore, this bill heightens the standards for future birth centers in Kentucky by requiring accreditation by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers, the standard recommended by ACOG for freestanding birth centers.

I believe birth centers to be an excellent source of care for low-risk women and they will help fill the gaps in areas of Kentucky where prenatal care and deliveries are not easily accessible.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Case". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Elizabeth Case, MD