

April 22, 2021

Senate State, Judiciary Committee
Colorado General Assembly
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

RE: SB21-193 Protection of Pregnant People in Perinatal Period

Dear Members of the Senate State, Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jeanette Abelman and I am a volunteer lobbyist for the League of Women Voters of Colorado. The League is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Our membership spans the state of Colorado with 19 local leagues operating in several regions of the state. I am submitting this written testimony in partial support of SB21-193, on behalf of our state league's legislative action committee.

The League supports the reproductive rights of people. With respect to the sections of the bill pertaining to the training of staff in facilities that incarcerates pregnant persons, as well as the expansion of services to be provided to those persons, the League stands in full support of those provisions. We also stand in full support of the prohibition on the use of constraints during pregnancy, labor and delivery without circumstances warranting their use.

Persons incarcerated while pregnant deserve services to help produce the best possible outcome for both themselves and their unborn child. The development of programs set forth in the bill, such as access to perinatal care, healthy foods, exercise, education on nutrition, and counseling for a wide range of mental health and behavioral problems are vital to ensure a good outcome. This bill provides those necessary services.

Incarcerated persons deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and provided with a special level of care and support. We also stand in support of the bills extending of support services postpartum. Helping to promote bonding postpartum by enhancing visitation policies, and giving breastfeeding support when appropriate, provides that respect and level of care. Providing community resources after release from incarceration are necessary to ensure the well being of the person and the child, and have ramifications that extend well beyond the first few month of life. We stand in support of the sections of the bill as well.

With respect to the rest of the provisions set for the bill, we will be monitoring them to see what amendments may be proposed before stating our position.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue and we urge you to consider passage of the bill as it pertains to pregnant persons who are incarcerated.

LMPV Testimony | [Protection of Pregnant People in the Perinatal Period](#)

My name is Victoria Dadet, and I'm the Let My People Vote Coordinator for Soul 2 Soul Sisters where we organize for Black Womxn's Healing and Liberation here in Denver. I'm testifying on behalf of our Let My People Vote program to urge you to support Senate Bill 193.

We need this bill because it will establish basic human rights standards for pregnant people and, unfortunately, the research around experiences of many Black, Indigenous and Latina women within health care systems shows a disregard for our human rights. From doctors withholding access to life-saving care due to their racial biases, to the inadequate treatment for pregnant people who are incarcerated, it's clear that basic human rights are not being met for many of our birthing communities of color. And this lack of a human rights approach to pregnancy care has serious consequences. The CDC states that Black women are 243% more likely to die from pregnancy and childbirth-related causes compared to white women. Due to the legacy of slavery and institutionalized anti-Black racism, the United States is one of the most dangerous places to be pregnant for Black womxn.

Our communities have made it very clear that now is the time to address the racism and misogyny that are killing our people within healthcare systems. We should be focusing on finding solutions for our communities and part of that solution is making sure our healthcare policies prioritize health outcomes for all people, especially marginalized communities. At Let My People Vote, we stand firm in our belief that your care should be determined by what your needs are, not where you live or how much money you have. Everyone has the right to birth in a safe environment, including those that are incarcerated.

We need birth justice now, and we urge you to support Senate Bill 193 to close the gaps in access to the services that people need and to ensure all pregnant people have perinatal experiences that are consensual, dignified, and safe. Thank you for your time.



illuminate
Building Brighter Childhoods

Mister Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jillian Fabricius, Director of Strategic Initiatives with Illuminate Colorado, a statewide nonprofit working to strengthen families, organizations, and communities to prevent child maltreatment. I am writing **in support of SB21-193 Protection of Pregnant People in Perinatal Period** on behalf of Illuminate, the Colorado Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.

Simply put, children do well when their parents and caregivers do well, and **ensuring pregnant and postpartum people have accessible and responsive maternal health care is crucial for family well-being**. Complementing the federal Momnibus bill package, SB21-193 includes numerous provisions to enhance Colorado's infrastructure to support all families to thrive during the perinatal period by addressing racial inequities and other disparities in infant and maternal care directly.

In particular, **we enthusiastically support provisions of the bill that establish requirements for ensuring pregnant and postpartum people not only have access and connections to needed services but also have opportunities to promote attachment and bonding with their newborns during a formative time for new and expanding families.**

When families have information and access to available local resources to meet basic needs, we strengthen the foundation for families and communities to thrive. **Access to concrete supports in times of need—including health care throughout the perinatal period—is a research-based protective factor that lowers the risk of child abuse and neglect**, and a key way to offer families a strong start by ensuring they receive the basic necessities everyone deserves in order to grow.^[i]

Additionally, promoting attachment and bonding after birth--by creating opportunities for dyads to have positive experiences and loving relationships--creates a strong foundation that helps ensure that a child builds the skills necessary for a lifetime of strong mental health. **Investing in practices and policies that promote healthy development through SB193 ensures that children and families build the skills they need to be successful.**

Other sections of this bill and the birth equity bill package work in tandem in order to ensure pregnant and postpartum people have pathways for and recourse around the quality of service delivery and coordination they receive—which strengthens our systems so that care is designed both to preserve the dignity of pregnant and parenting people and to promote their and their family's healthy development, resilience and ability to advocate for and receive the resources they need.^[ii]

By strengthening our infrastructure for all families to thrive during the perinatal period, especially for families of color, Indigenous families, undocumented families, people who are low-income, and people with disabilities, we can keep the wellbeing of our state's children and families an urgent and high priority. In short, **SB21-193 would ensure that more pregnant and parenting people have what they need to support their health and wellbeing--and ultimately will lead to more safe, healthy, and thriving families.**

Sincerely,
Jillian Adams Fabricius
Director of Strategic Initiatives
jfabricius@illuminatecolorado.org
(303) 413-3460

^[i] Center for the Study of Social Policy. *Protective Factor Framework*. <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>

^[ii] Ibid.

^[iii] Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (2020). *Colorado Maternal Mortality Prevention Program Legislative Report 2014–2016*.

Bill: SB 21-193 “Maternal Health Providers”

Committee: Senate Judiciary Committee

Date: Apr 22, 2021

Submitted by: Jill Bergmann

Organization: International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN), Denver Chapter

Position: SUPPORT SB21-193

Testimony: The International Cesarean Awareness Network is in full support of SB 21-193.

This bill addresses issues within multiple systems to correct inequities in maternal health care, understanding that maternal rights are human rights.

Regarding malpractice insurance for VBACs, Section 10-4-106.5:

- Colorado has repeatedly agreed through legislation and regulations that VBAC (vaginal birth after a cesarean) is a safe and reasonable choice with licensed health care providers along a spectrum of birth locations—home, birth center, and hospital.
- Despite this long-time judgement of the state, the providers of malpractice insurance coverage have not updated their policies to meet Colorado’s needs.
- Licensed professionals in hospital or at home currently are covered through their malpractice insurance to attend VBACs. Licensed professionals at birth centers are not.
- As a result, we have birth options for VBAC on the two ends of the spectrum (hospital or home) which are covered by malpractice insurance, and a de facto ban on VBACs at the middle option—birth centers.
- Why is this important?
 - Both overall public health and individual health benefit from the reduction of unnecessary c-sections.
 - Though often a needed and life-saving tool, c-sections cause harm when they are performed too frequently and without need, increasing risk to maternal health in each subsequent cesarean birth.
 - VBAC is supported by ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists).
 - “VBAC is associated with decreased maternal morbidity and a decreased risk of complications in future pregnancies, as well as a decrease in the overall cesarean delivery rate at the population level.”
 - By allowing malpractice insurance carriers to continue overriding the long-term and repeated judgement by the Colorado legislature and regulatory agencies, we reduce access to VBACs, thereby increasing overall maternal risk, and increasing Colorado health care costs.
- SB 21-193 corrects this de facto ban on VBACs at Colorado’s licensed birth centers and restores the full spectrum of safe, licensed and approved birth options to all Coloradans.

Therefore, I request your **YES** vote on this bill, and specifically on Section 10-4-106.5, so that Colorado individuals and families have full access to evidence-based care with the licensed providers at their preferred location of birth.

About ICAN: The International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN) is a volunteer-based organization that offers peer support and education to individuals and families, and to advocate for policies that center patient autonomy and evidence-based practices. Our Denver chapter was established in 1994.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Abelman

Jeanette Abelman

League of Women Voters of Colorado

1410 Grant Street, Suite B-204

Denver, CO 80203