



SUPPORTS

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Midwifery Modernization Act **S5007/A8117**

The National organization for Women - NYS strongly supports Senate Bill 5007/Assembly Bill 8117. This Midwifery Modernization Act will amend the Midwifery Practice Act (Article 140 of the Education Law) to remove an existing requirement that midwives have written practice agreements with physicians. The National Organization for Women (NOW) has long supported reproductive freedom as a priority issue, and believes that women should have complete authority over their reproductive lives.

Reproductive freedom includes not only the ability to decide whether or when to bear children, but also the right to plan a birth with a medical provider of one's choice, in either a hospital or an alternative setting such as a freestanding birth center or private residence.

Women have historically given birth with midwives; and midwifery has been endorsed by the World Health Organization. Also midwifery offers many benefits, including lower costs, lower rates of premature births, higher rates of breastfeeding, and greater satisfaction with the birthing experience. Furthermore, midwifery has a lower incidence of medical interventions, including Caesarean sections episiotomies.

Removing the written practice physician agreement will not cost the state anything! In fact, because of midwifery's cost-effective qualities, increased access will likely result in significant savings for Medicaid and private insurers. And now fifteen other states, namely AK, AZ, CT, DC, ID, IA, ME, MN, NH, NM, OR, RI, WA, WY, and NJ (pending), authorize midwifery practice without written practice agreements.

To summarize, women's access to midwifery and traditional birthing practices is often limited by restrictive laws and non-coverage by private insurance companies and state-subsidized funding. In the interest in improving this situation, **NOW-NYS strongly urges the passage of S5007/A8117.**