

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2016

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health Care, March 20, 2017

Title: An act relating to access to midwifery and doula services for incarcerated women.

Brief Description: Concerning midwifery and doula services for incarcerated women.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives DeBolt, Hayes, Stanford, Doglio and Muri).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/17, 97-1.

Committee Activity: Health Care: 3/20/17, 3/20/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires jails and the Department of Corrections to make reasonable accommodations for the provision of midwifery and doula services to inmates who are pregnant or have recently given birth.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rivers, Chair; Becker, Vice Chair; Cleveland, Ranking Minority Member; Kuderer, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Conway, Keiser, Miloscia, Mullet, O'Ban and Walsh.

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: Midwifery and Doula Services. A licensed advanced registered nurse practitioner may be designated as a certified nurse midwife. A licensed midwife renders medical care for compensation to a woman during prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum stages. Requirements for licensure include a certificate or diploma from a midwifery program; a minimum of three years of midwifery training; educational requirements; observation of women in the intrapartum period; and passage of an examination.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A doula is a person who provides support to a woman before, during, and after childbirth. A doula may be trained and certified by a professional organization, but is not licensed as a health care provider.

Maternity Services for Incarcerated Women. Prisons and jails provide for medically necessary health care services for incarcerated persons. This includes maternity services provided in prenatal care, delivery, and postpartum care. For pregnant prison inmates, services are provided in the facility that a Department of Corrections (Department) health care practitioner determines is appropriate for the level of service required. For pregnant inmates in jail, jail personnel transport the inmate to her prenatal medical appointments in the community.

Washington Corrections Center for Women. The Residential Parenting Program at the Washington Corrections Center for Women provides a residential setting to allow incarcerated mothers to keep their infants with them during their incarceration. To be eligible for participation, an inmate must meet certain criteria and be eligible for release prior to her infant turning 30 months old. The program includes prenatal and postnatal programs.

Summary of Bill: The Department and jails must make reasonable accommodations for the provision of available midwifery and doula services to inmates who are pregnant or who have given birth in the last six weeks. A person providing midwifery or doula services must be granted appropriate facility access; be allowed to attend and provide assistance during labor and childbirth, where feasible; and have access to the inmate's relevant health care information if the inmate authorizes disclosure.

Nothing requires the Department or governing units to establish or provide funding for midwifery or doula services, and nothing prevents the adoption of policy guidelines related to the delivery of midwifery or doula services to inmates. The midwifery or doula services provided may not supplant health care services routinely provided to the inmate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a larger number of women incarcerated today than in our past. The ability to access doulas and midwives helps women prisoners be able to prepare emotionally to give up their child and to become a model inmate in order to get their child back. This is voluntary and does not use state dollars. It is stressful to be pregnant and incarcerated. This would provide support to the women involved and helps to contribute to their emotional health and well-being. This will ensure healthy birth outcomes. Stress has a negative impact on babies; babies who are born to a mother who is stressed are more likely to be born pre-term and with low birth weight. Midwives and doulas would volunteer their services and would not supplant care of other health care providers. This would clarify that access to midwives and doulas is required.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Richard DeBolt, Prime Sponsor; Audrey Levine, Midwives' Association of WA State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.