

HCS HBs 2632 & 1446 -- HEALTH INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT OF DOULA SERVICES

SPONSOR: Hausman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Healthcare Reform by a vote of 11 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Regulatory Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 2632.

This bill creates a registration process to allow health insurance reimbursement of doula services.

The bill defines the term "doula" as an individual who has been trained to provide physical, emotional, and educational support, but not medical or midwifery care, to pregnant and birthing women and their families before, during, and after childbirth.

The Department of Health and Senior Services is required to create the criteria for doula registration applications. In creating the criteria the Department must consult with relevant organizations that support access to community-based doula services, as specified in the bill.

The Department must review and approve doula registrations to allow for health insurance reimbursement of these services and maintain a statewide registry of approved doulas.

This bill does not prohibit any person from practicing as a doula in Missouri regardless of whether the person is registered in accordance with the provisions of the bill.

This bill is the same as HB 1446 (2024) and similar to HB 900 (2023).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that doulas provide an array of support in multiple areas of health care and assist mothers and families in the navigation of the pregnancy. Additionally, the use of doulas for the childbirth experience can contribute to reduced instances of lower birth weight and reduced NICU stays, and will expand the

maternal health workforce. The State ranks among the highest of the 50 states in maternal and infant mortality.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Hausman; Abortion Action Missouri (Formerly Pro Choice Missouri); Campaign Life Missouri; Hakima Payne, Uzazi Village; Winton Policy Group, BJC Health; Missouri Hospital Association; American College of Obstetricians and the Gynecologists; Health Forward Foundation.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that the State's maternal mortality rate is 25% higher than the national average, and that globally, doula care leads to more vaginal births with better outcomes. Mothers have indicated that they are more involved and present throughout the process with doulas. States that have reimbursement for doula services indicate fewer medical interventions when doulas are present, but that there is a dearth of information on how premiums are impacted; there are barriers to coverage as well.

Testifying in person on the bill were Missouri Insurance Coalition; The Doula Foundation; America's Health Insurance Plans; Justice Gatson, Reale Justice Network; and the Mo-Kan Bipoc Reproductive Justice Coalition.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.