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SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Constitution of the State of Illinois provides for "the health, safety and welfare of the people" and the "opportunity for the fullest development of the individual"; and

WHEREAS, Four thriving Illinois nurse-midwifery homebirth practices have closed or discontinued homebirth services in the past ten years; and

WHEREAS, One of these practices, Alivio Medical Center in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, combined the services of nurse-midwives and direct-entry midwives to provide innovative and culturally-sensitive homebirth services for an under-served, low-income, low-literacy, Mexican-American and immigrant community (93 percent Medicaid patients) and was recognized by the American College of Nurse Midwives' Kitty Ernst Award in 1998, and won the Unicef Safe Motherhood Initiative-USA Model Awards in 1999 and 2000; and

WHEREAS, Seventeen Illinois direct-entry midwifery homebirth practices have closed following the issuance of cease and desist orders in 1997; and

WHEREAS, While the above-mentioned closing of the midwifery practices occurred for a variety of reasons, including the malpractice crisis and the issuance of cease and desist orders, the overall impact on families is a detrimental reduction of maternity care options; and

WHEREAS, Legally recognized homebirth practices (nurse-midwifery and/or physician practices) are found in only 5 of 102 Illinois Counties (Cook, Bureau, DuPage, Lake, and Winnebago counties), and all of these practices are located in the northern half of the State; and

1 WHEREAS, According to a survey of Illinois birth
2 certificates, in 2003, 738 Illinois births occurred without a
3 trained birth attendant (neither a medical person nor a
4 midwife); and

5 WHEREAS, Unattended birth is less safe than birth attended
6 by trained providers; and

7 WHEREAS, All well-designed homebirth studies show that for
8 women with low-risk pregnancies, planned homebirth attended by
9 a trained maternity care provider is as safe as hospital birth;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Oprah Winfrey, J. D. Salinger, Roseanne Barr,
12 Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Duke Ellington, Mother Theresa,
13 Albert Einstein, Andy Warhol, U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch, and
14 Presidents Calvin Coolidge, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford,
15 Richard Nixon, and John F. Kennedy were all born at home; and

16 WHEREAS, Cindy Crawford, Rikki Lake, Demi Moore, Lucy
17 Lawless, Meryl Streep, Lisa Bonet, Carol King, Pamela Anderson,
18 Jade Jagger, and Kelly Preston have all given birth at home;
19 therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL
21 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the Senate finds it
22 unacceptable that many Illinois mothers are without adequate
23 maternity care providers; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That it is in the State's best interest to ensure
25 access to all safe maternity care options; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognizes that home births are a
27 healthy method of delivering babies; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That Illinois families, in order to best meet
2 personal needs and desires, should be free to choose among all
3 safe, nationally recognized maternity care options, including
4 free-standing birth centers and home birth; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That as the General Assembly grapples with
6 solving the crisis in OB/GYN service, the roles of midwives be
7 included in the discussion.