



## Midwives' Lobby Day Report 2015

Over 50 people turned out in Olympia on February 12<sup>th</sup> for Midwives' Lobby Day 2015, with student midwives, once again, bringing their incredible energy and enthusiasm into meetings with legislators, having been exceptionally well prepared for the day by Kristin Effland, LM, CPM.

We educated our representatives about the health benefits and the significant cost savings to the State of WA associated with licensed midwifery care, and we asked them to support the ongoing budget proviso to keep the midwifery licensing fee capped at \$525. Without this cap, our annual renewal fee would be over \$1,500 and the lawmakers we spoke with seemed to appreciate that maintaining the cap has enabled our profession to grow substantially over the past 5 years, conferring even greater benefit to the State and to the health of moms and babies.

In addition, we brought to their attention a bill that MAWS has introduced to create certification for birth assistants. Rep. Eileen Cody, Chair of the House Health Care Committee, has agreed to send the bill to a Sunrise Review at the Department of Health over the interim—a process that occurs whenever a new profession is proposed. The Sunrise Review process revealed an alternative resolution to the concerns of the Department of Health, midwives and birth assistants; it was decided a legislative approach was unnecessary so we will not be re-introducing our bill in 2016.

Finally, we asked legislators to support HB 1080/SB 5010, which would re-fund the [Scholarship](#) and [Loan Repayment](#) Program. And it worked! In the past, Licensed Midwives have been able to pay off their significant debt from their midwifery education by working in under-served areas around the state. In recent years, due to a lack of funds, the program had been defunct. This legislation restored funding to the program. We made a compelling case that increasing the number of midwives serving in rural and underserved areas, where a high percentage of folks are on Medicaid, would ultimately save the state money. Just last month, [9 LM sites](#) were approved throughout WA!

If you didn't make it to Lobby Day, you can still make a difference by contacting your representatives and letting them know that you'd like their support on these issues.

To find out who your representatives are, go to: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/> You can either call or email, but please take a moment to do so and encourage your clients, too! Look for specific language, coming soon on the MAWS website.