

## **Testimony in Opposition to House Bill No. 1464**

Megan Heer, Owner of Sacred Mother Maternity Support and Doula Agency  
Certified Birth Doula, Certified Postpartum Doula, Certified Lactation Counselor

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Megan Heer, and I am the owner of Sacred Mother Maternity Support and Doula Agency. I am a Certified Birth Doula, Certified Postpartum Doula, and Certified Lactation Counselor. I strongly oppose House Bill No. 1464 as written because it restricts North Dakota Certified Postpartum Doulas to only those trained and certified by DONA International. This restriction creates unnecessary barriers for doulas and limits essential postpartum care options for families in our state.

DONA International is just one of many well-respected doula certification organizations. By exclusively recognizing DONA, this bill disregards the credibility of other reputable programs that provide comprehensive, evidence-based, and culturally competent doula training. It also devalues the training and experience of postpartum doulas already serving North Dakota families under other recognized certifications.

Additionally, North Dakota has a significant Native American population, and DONA International has a documented history of racial insensitivity. Many Indigenous communities do not feel comfortable with DONA, and mandating its certification as the only recognized pathway for postpartum doulas in North Dakota could exclude Native doulas and culturally relevant training programs. This bill would effectively isolate entire communities from accessing certified postpartum doula care that aligns with their values and traditions.

I urge the committee to reject this bill to allow the recognition of multiple certifying organizations, particularly those that prioritize cultural inclusivity and meet professional training standards. Ensuring that families have access to postpartum doula support from diverse and qualified providers should be the priority—not limiting certification to a single organization with a problematic history.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions from the committee.

Megan Heer

Owner of Sacred Mother Maternity Support and Doula Agency

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