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Chicago South Side Birth Center

Dear Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board,

I fully support the much-needed Chicago South Side Birth Center. I am the director of midwifery at the Birth Center of Chicago located in the North Center neighborhood. Having worked at both the Birth Center at PCC and my current birth center, I have seen the importance of having a safe and welcoming space for birthing families in a community. These spaces offer physical, emotional, social, and intellectual support as families gain the skills to ensure wellness for themselves and their babies. There are currently no resources like this by Black people for Black people on the South Side of Chicago. It is imperative that the state of Illinois grant this organization the ability to open and offer these critical services.

Black women in Chicago have the highest rates of severe maternal morbidity and Black babies in Chicago have the highest infant mortality rates. These disparities are exacerbated by lack of care options in Black communities. The Chicago South Side Birth Center will be uniquely positioned to address these health disparities. Birth center care has been shown to decrease rates of c-section, preterm birth, and low birth weight while increasing client satisfaction (American Association of Birth Centers (2019) *Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns Initiative National Report*. AABC website). I have witnessed firsthand the impact of caring, attentive, respectful midwifery care. Black birthing people deserve to have access to this care in a culturally congruent setting.

The Birth Center of Chicago supports the Chicago South Side Birth Center. We look forward to community collaboration and sharing of resources to further the cause of improving birth in Chicago.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Jaume". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized "J".

Jennifer Jaume, CNM
Director of Midwifery