[Name of MPP/Party Leader]

[Street Address]

[City/ Town, Postal Code]

**Date**

Dear (Mr. Ms. Mrs.) (Surname)

As a constituent in your riding and I am writing to you to express my strong opposition to institutional policies that state that a birthing person must birth alone, without one support person of their choosing.

The World Health Organization has taken the position that “All pregnant [persons], including those with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infections, have the right to high quality care before, during and after childbirth. This includes antenatal, newborn, postnatal, intrapartum and mental health care.” The WHO further stipulates that “A safe and positive childbirth experience includes… [h]aving a companion of choice present during delivery.” Prevention has been explicitly identified spouses/partners as “essential support persons for women in labor” during the COVID-19 crisis, and further peer reviewed research has demonstrated that continuous support during childbirth affects both the birthing persons experiences and birth outcomes; it reduces the need for medical interventions, including medicated births, and improves both maternal and neonatal outcomes. Similarly Pascali-Bonaro reported; a reduction in the use of oxytocin, analgesia, instrument deliveries and duration of labour as well as improved maternal satisfaction, bonding with the baby, improved neonatal outcomes as well as reduced maternal anxiety. All studies have shown that decreased strain on the current medical system is a possibility, both from a resource-based perspective and from a financial perspective.

With the already limited resources out there to address perinatal mental illness and the rising fear and isolation of individuals during this pandemic, working towards prevention is key. I am writing to you out of concern that lack of loving support during labour and the immediate postpartum period will have long term effects on the mental health and wellbeing of birthing persons and their children.

There is no doubt that protecting parents, babies, and hospital staff members from contracting and/or spreading Covid-19 is of primary importance. But,in strictly controlled environments where everyone agrees to respect the rules of infection spread prevention, the evidence for the presence of a chosen support person in the birthing room has such high benefit that it becomes our duty to find better strategies than making birthing people come into the hospital alone.

I am requesting that you work with provincial health authorities to ensure hospital and birthing centre policies across your province are consistent in allowing for birthing persons one support person throughout their birthing journey.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns, and I look forward to receiving a response from you.

**Sincerely,**

[Name]

[Address]

[City, Province]

[Postal Code]

[Email]

[Phone Number]