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Contact: Wendy Greenwald, 720-488-1116

Dear Editor,

In June, you covered Ricki Lake's controversial documentary about homebirths which instigated a growing battle between the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Medical Association (AMA), midwives, and patients.

The conflict is about the perceived safety of home births and the use of Certified Professional Midwives (CPM) or "lay" midwives. Last month, the AMA issued a resolution asking for legislation against home births and against "lay" midwives.

As President of DONA International, the oldest and largest association of doulas in the world, we represent the thousands of woman who cherish their ability to choose where they give birth and with whom. We also question the evidence supporting the ACOG and AMA's statements that "the safest setting for labor, delivery and the immediate post-partum period is in the hospital"

The largest, most respected study of home births found that among 5,000 low-risk pregnancies, babies were delivered just as safely at home with a CPM as in a hospital. Currently, twenty-one states license midwives to attend home births, using both CM certified midwives, which the AMA and ACOG recognize and CPM designated midwives, which they do not. Only about one percent of American births take place outside of a hospital. Because most doulas work with midwives and physicians in a hospital setting, DONA International has no financial interest in the outcome of such legislation called for by the AMA. Our interest is in the scientific evidence and in maintaining the conviction that pregnant women, just as all other patients, are intelligent enough to give informed consent.

Sincerely,

Debbie Young, President of DONA International
www.DONA.org