



JASMINE BLACKWATER-NYGREN
First Lady of the Navajo Nation

January 13, 2024

Dear Esteemed Leaders and Advocates,

As First Lady of the Navajo Nation, I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Doula Credentialing and Access Act (House Bill, 57th Legislature, State of New Mexico - First Session, 2025). This critical piece of legislation holds the values and principles that are engrained in Navajo traditions and holds the promise of transforming maternal and infant health outcomes for our families and communities.

In Diné culture, the sacredness of birth is central to the balance and well-being of our people. Our traditional practices honor the mother's journey, the child's arrival, and the interconnectedness of family and community. Doulas, particularly those who provide culturally responsive care, are a modern extension of these traditional values, offering support that reflects the strength of our culture while addressing contemporary health disparities.

The Doula Credentialing and Access Act establishes a framework for credentialing doulas, integrating their services into Medicaid, and fostering culturally responsive care. By increasing equitable access to doula services, this Bill directly addresses the maternal and infant health disparities that disproportionately affect Indigenous communities. It promotes holistic and culturally appropriate care that prioritizes the health, dignity, and spiritual well-being of Navajo mothers and children.

This collaborative effort was led by the New Mexico Doula Bill Coalition, which includes the Navajo Birthworker Collective, New Mexico Doula Association, New Mexico Human Services Department, Tewa Women United, and other committed organizations. These organizations reflect the collective dedication to creating a healthcare system that is equitable, respectful, and inclusive of the unique needs of Indigenous families.



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The passage of this Bill will not only benefit Navajo families but also create cross-cultural understanding by highlighting the importance of traditional practices and values in maternal care. It represents a bridge between our traditions and modern healthcare, demonstrating how diverse perspectives can come together to improve the health and well-being of all communities.

I encourage all policymakers to recognize the transformative potential of this legislation. Supporting the Doula Credentialing and Access Act is an investment in the future of our families, our children, and our shared commitment to health equity.

As First Lady, I stand ready to advocate for this Bill and collaborate with others to ensure its success. Together, we can honor our traditions, uplift our families, and build a brighter future for generations to come.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to this vital cause.

Ahé'hee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Blackwater-Nygren".

Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren
Navajo Nation First Lady