

# PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign

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## Idaho Pushes Midwife Movement to the Tipping Point

*Physician and Midwife Groups Forge Unprecedented Alliance as Idaho Becomes the 26th State to Pass Legislation Legalizing Certified Professional Midwives*

BOISE, ID (April 1, 2009)—Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter signed into law today a bill to license and regulate Certified Professional Midwives, making Idaho the 26th state to legally authorize them to provide out-of-hospital maternity care. In a notable reversal of longstanding anti-midwife policies, medical groups worked together with legislators, midwives, and advocates to reach consensus on a law that provides for independent practice, mutual collaboration, and the rights of parents to choose where and how their babies are born.

“This is a great day for midwives and home birth advocates all across the country,” said Kyndal May of [Idahoans for Midwives](#). “We truly have reached the tipping point, breaking through the medical lobby’s longstanding opposition and developing a legislative consensus model that other states are looking to follow.”

Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs), who practice primarily in hospital settings, are legally authorized in all 50 states, while Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), who specialize in out-of-hospital birth, until today were legally authorized to practice in just half the states. Representatives from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign noted that Idaho typifies recent legislative trends across the country, as a growing number of states come closer to passing CPM legislation.

“We’re seeing unprecedented advances this legislative season,” said Katie Prown, Campaign Manager of The Big Push for Midwives. “For the first time, physician groups are coming to the table and negotiating in good faith, and bills that had long been stalled in previously antagonistic committees are suddenly starting to move.” States that have recently seen significant legislative advances include South Dakota, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, North Carolina, and Alabama. Idaho joins Missouri and Maine as among the most recent states to legally authorize CPMs to provide maternity care.

“It’s clear that organized medicine has finally realized that, between current economic trends and the drive for healthcare reform, the demand for access to CPMs and out-of-hospital maternity care is only going to grow,” said Susan M. Jenkins, Legal Counsel for the Big Push. “It simply makes good sense to pass laws that provide for regulatory oversight, transparency, and accountability, all of which are necessary to ensure safe practice.”

Thousands of people from across the nation watched the Senate floor vote on live video from the Idaho statehouse last week, cheering on their fellow midwife advocates on Facebook, Twitter, and email groups. “It’s very exciting to be part of a growing national movement,” said Michelle Bartlett, CPM, Legislative Liaison for the Idaho Midwifery Council. “I’m humbled to hear from so many advocates in other states who are looking to us as a model for how to work with every stakeholder to craft CPM legislation that addresses the needs and concerns of all of us who care about the health and safety of mothers and babies.”

Idaho is a priority of [The Big Push for Midwives Campaign](#), a nationally coordinated campaign to advocate for regulation and licensure of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and to push back against the attempts of the American Medical Association Scope of Practice Partnership to deny American families access to legal midwifery care. Through its work with state-level advocates, the Big Push is helping to forge a [new model of U.S. maternity care](#) built on expanding access to out-of-hospital maternity care and CPMs, who provide affordable, quality, community-based care that is proven to reduce costly and preventable interventions as well as the rate of low-birth weight and premature births.

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