



Friends of Missouri Midwives
www.friendsofMOMidwives.org



Missouri Midwives Association
www.missourimidwivesassociation.org



Show-Me Freedom in Healthcare
www.showmefreedompac.org



Free the Midwives
www.freethemidwives.org

News from Missouri Midwives Supporters

CONTACT: Mary Ueland (417) 543-4258, better_birth@yahoo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, February 9, 2009

MEDIA ALERT

Home-baked Cookies in Gratitude: Missouri Families Thank State Lawmakers for Legalizing Certified Professional Midwives

Midwife supporters come from across Missouri to show their gratitude

WHAT:

Once again, Valentine's Day is coming early this year to policy makers at the State Capitol Building in Jefferson City, Missouri. That's because midwife advocates and home birth supporters from across the state will come Tuesday with home-baked cookies and valentines for their fifth annual "Cookie Day" on Tuesday at the Missouri Capitol. This year, Cookie Day celebrates a newly won freedom and thanks lawmakers during an afternoon rally for their efforts to change Missouri's once-hostile midwifery law.

"At last year's Cookie Day, our supporters deluged legislators with more than 400 dozen cookies and other baked treats," remembers Mary Ueland, Grassroots Coordinator for the Friends of Missouri Midwives. "After last summer's state Supreme Court ruling declared that Missouri families may have legal access to Certified Professional Midwives, we expect even more. People are so excited."

This year midwife supporters will be joined by journalist Jennifer Block from Brooklyn, New York. Jennifer Block has been watching the recent events in Missouri and is coming to celebrate the newly won victory for Missouri's home birth families. Block writes on the convergence of women's health and politics and has recently focused on the U.S. maternity care system and the lack of access to midwifery care. She is a former editor of Ms. Magazine and her work has appeared in the Village Voice, The Nation, Salon.com, ELLE, Mother Jones and the eco-lifestyle magazine, Plenty. Block, along with former State Senator John Loudon and other advocates of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) will speak in the State Capitol rotunda at 1 pm on Tuesday afternoon.

In a 5 to 2 ruling in June 2008, the Missouri Supreme Court upheld a law that legalizes CPMs who practice in the state. The Court determined that the physician groups that brought the suit to overturn the law lacked standing because their only interest in the case was economic. The decision made CPMs legally authorized to practice and removed the threat of prosecution for CPMs assisting families who choose out-of-hospital birth. As the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported last week, the victory made moot the long-running filibuster orchestrated by the Missouri State Medical Association, which represents physician special interests.

"Many legislators worked to make CPMs legal in Missouri, but none so much as former Senator John Loudon of Chesterfield," said Ueland. "He withstood the state medical society's punitive lobbying efforts against any change of Missouri's then-existing midwifery law, considered one of the most restrictive and hostile in the nation. At that time, the law actually made the practice of midwifery by anyone other than a physician a Class C Felony.

(more)

Page 2 of 2

Homemade Cookies Baked in Gratitude: Missouri Families Thank State Lawmakers for Legalizing Certified Professional Midwives

“Our Annual ‘Cookie Day’ is a fun opportunity for the people of Missouri to come and show their support for midwives and demand the right to choose their own health care providers. Since the pregnant women joining us know that they don’t have to worry about their midwives being arrested, this year’s festivities are especially sweet.”

WHEN AND WHERE:

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10** at the Capitol Building, 201 W Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, Missouri. Cookie Day “home base” is on the 1st floor northwest alcove.

RALLY AT: 1 pm, Capitol Rotunda, 1st floor. Don't miss Jennifer Block!

WHO:

Cookie Day 2009 is co-sponsored by the **Friends of Missouri Midwives, Missouri Midwives Association, Show-Me Freedom in Healthcare, and Free the Midwives**. Missouri 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 build 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 proven to reduce costly and preventable interventions as well as the rate of low-birth weight and premature births.

The Big Push Campaign Manager Katie Prown says, “The demand for safe and less-costly maternity care has been steadily increasing in recent years, as more people realize that we can no longer afford a system that produces inferior results at premium costs.”

CONTACT:

Media inquiries about any of the Missouri organizations or Cookie Day 2009 should be directed to Mary Ueland at (417) 543-4258, better_birth@yahoo.com. Media inquiries about The Big Push for Midwives Campaign should be directed to Steff Hedenkamp at (816) 506-4630, Steff@TheBigPushForMidwives.org.

#####
