

Sponsors: Senator London Lamar, Tennessee, and Senator Natalie Murdock, North Carolina

Reducing Rates of Maternal Mortality for U.S. Black Women through Comprehensive Access to Care

COMMITTEE: Health (HEA)

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black mothers in the United States are three to four times more likely than other mothers to die from pregnancy-related causes; and

WHEREAS, Black women in the United States suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications, known as "maternal morbidities," twice as often as other women; and

WHEREAS, maternal mortality rates in the United States are among the highest in the developed world and are increasing rapidly; and

WHEREAS, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate among affluent countries, in part because of the disproportionate mortality rate of Black mothers; and

WHEREAS, the high rates of maternal mortality among Black women span across income levels, education levels, and socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, the social determinants of health inequities experienced by Black women in the United States significantly contribute to the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women; and

WHEREAS, lack of resources and inequities play a consequential role in maternal health care, experiences, and outcomes; and

WHEREAS, a fair distribution of resources, especially with regard to reproductive healthcare services and maternal health programming, is critical to closing the maternal health racial disparity gap; and

WHEREAS, even as there is a growing concern about improving access to mental health services, Black women are least likely to have access to mental health screenings, treatment, and support before, during, and after pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, justice-informed, culturally congruent models of care are beneficial to Black women; and

WHEREAS, an investment must be made in maternity care for Black women and policies that support and promote affordable, comprehensive, and holistic maternal health care; and

WHEREAS, "Black Maternal Health Week" founded by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance in 2017; and

WHEREAS, "Black Maternal Health Week" brings national attention to the maternal health crisis in the Black community and the importance of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY N.O.B.E.L. WOMEN, that we raise national awareness of the state of Black maternal health in the United States by amplifying the voices of Black women, families, and communities, we commend the Black Mamas Matter Alliance for their national organizing around Black Maternal Health Week, encourage federal and state governments to adopt policies that reduce the maternal mortality rates of Black women and improve access to comprehensive maternal care.

Introduced by: The Honorable London Lamar

Tennessee State Senate