

BIRTH JUSTICE BILL OF RIGHTS

* adapted from Black Midwives Care

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This *Birth Justice Bill of Rights* is your tool to know your rights and advocate for the respectful care you deserve. Health disparities do not exist in a vacuum, but are a reflection of the power disparities in our society that must shift in order for us to be healthy. The historical exploitation and abuse of Black folks in the medical industrial complex has implications for health outcomes. Written by a Black mama and midwife, the Birth Justice Bill of Rights is centered on Black mamas and non-binary/transgender parents, on the realities of our lives.



BIRTH JUSTICE BILL OF RIGHTS



As a Black pre-conception, pregnant, birthing or postpartum person, I have the right to:

1. STAND AGAINST RACISM.
2. KNOW MY HISTORY AND RESIST INSTITUTIONAL RACISM.
3. HONOR MY VALUES.
4. EXPRESS MY CULTURE.
5. DEVELOP A NETWORK OF SAFETY AND SUPPORT.
6. REPRESENT MY BLACKNESS.
7. CARE FOR ALL MY IDENTITIES.
8. PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE.
9. UNDERSTAND HOW RACISM IMPACTS MY HEALTH.
10. RESPECT MY FAMILY STRUCTURE.
11. COMPREHENSIVE CARE AFTER I GIVE BIRTH.
12. SUPPORT FROM MY DOULA.
13. ACCESS TO EVERYTHING I NEED TO BE HEALTHY.
14. SUPPORT IN REDUCING STRESS.
15. INCLUSION IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT ME.
16. ENSURE ACCESS TO ALL BIRTH CARE OPTIONS.
17. HONOR THE NATURAL BIRTH PROCESS.
18. SUPPORT MY BABY'S RIGHT TO HUMAN MILK.
19. GET A SECOND OPINION.
20. ADVOCATE FOR MY RIGHTS.
21. TIME TO HEAL AND BOND.
22. RECOGNIZE THAT MY BODY IS ALWAYS MINE.

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1. Culturally sensitive and systemically aware health care providers that have been trained on microaggressions, anti-racism and implicit bias.
STAND AGAINST RACISM.
2. Have my healthcare providers recognize that the particular history of black people involves medical abuse, exploitation and discrimination and that this generational trauma affects my ability to trust the healthcare system.
KNOW MY HISTORY AND RESIST INSTITUTIONAL RACISM.
3. Holistic, compassionate care that incorporates my health care values.
HONOR MY VALUES.
4. Respect for my personal beliefs, cultural traditions and those of my ancestry.
EXPRESS MY CULTURE.
5. Develop a support system that feels safe and empowering.
DEVELOP A NETWORK OF SAFETY AND SUPPORT.
6. Have my racial identity recognized and respected in all care settings.
REPRESENT MY BLACKNESS.
7. Respect and consideration for my intersecting identities I.E. Race, gender identity, sexuality including disability status, LGBTQI+ status, socio-economic status, insurance, immigrant status etc.
CARE FOR ALL MY IDENTITIES.

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8. Have my life preserved and wellness uplifted by my family, community and the state including the right to be protected from domestic, state or obstetric violence.
PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE.
9. Thorough review of my health history including pre-existing health conditions and risk factors and to be involved in developing a care plan.
UNDERSTAND HOW RACISM IMPACTS MY HEALTH.
10. Include my familial and intimate relationships in my care, including non-heteronormative partners and extended family.
RESPECT MY FAMILY STRUCTURE.
11. Preventative postpartum health services including culturally appropriate home visits and mental health wellness services.
COMPREHENSIVE CARE AFTER I GIVE BIRTH.
12. Doula/birth companion support for advocacy, accountability and comfort.
SUPPORT FROM MY DOULA.
13. Access to healthy foods, vitamins and clean water, including transportation to obtain if I live in a food desert.
ACCESS TO EVERYTHING I NEED TO BE HEALTHY.

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14. Stress reduction practices including self care and detoxing white supremacy and patriarchy.

SUPPORT IN REDUCING STRESS.

15. Shared decision making in all health care options including comprehensive sex education, pre-conception and intra-conception care, pregnancy termination, prenatal care, birth and postpartum care.

INCLUSION IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT ME.

16. Health care from the provider of my choice in the setting that I prefer including but not limited to midwives, family care practitioners, obstetricians, birth centers and homebirths.

ENSURE ACCESS TO ALL BIRTH CARE OPTIONS.

17. To manage my labor according to the evidence base of physiologic birth including but not limited to birth environment, principles of non-invasive intervention, movement/positioning, eating and drinking and compassionate care.

HONOR THE NATURAL BIRTH PROCESS.

18. Access to lactation support including prenatal lactation education, immediate skin to skin contact with my baby and lactation consult within the first 12 hours after birth.

SUPPORT MY BABY'S RIGHT TO HUMAN MILK.

19. Be listen to and heard by all care providers and to change providers at any time.

GET A SECOND OPINION.

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20. Know my rights including the birth justice bill of rights, young mother's bill of rights, universal declaration of human rights, reproductive rights frameworks.

ADVOCATE FOR MY RIGHTS.

21. Paid parental leave from work, even if I am partially employed, unemployed, undocumented or fleeing an abusive relationship.

SUPPORT MY TIME TO HEAL AND BOND.

22. Never surrender my inalienable human right to bodily autonomy.

RECOGNIZE THAT MY BODY IS ALWAYS MINE.

These rights should be upheld and demanded wherever Black pregnant people are and should be compensated by federal, state and local governmental funding sources according to the principles of birth justice, human rights, reproductive justice, community building and self-determination.