

1 SR31
2 205503-1
3 By Senators McClendon, Sanders-Fortier, Albritton and Figures
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 27-FEB-20

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8 CREATING A COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
9 ESTABLISHING A MIDWIFERY PROGRAM AT WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY
10 COLLEGE IN SELMA.

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12 WHEREAS, the practice of midwifery has existed
13 throughout history; in the United States a resurgence in
14 midwifery occurred from the vision of public health nurses,
15 obstetricians, and social reformers concerned with high
16 maternal and infant mortality rates during the early decades
17 of the 20th century; in the 1940s, the greatest expansion in
18 midwifery occurred in the South and Southwest in home births,
19 birthing centers, and an occasional community hospital; and

20 WHEREAS, Alabama has seen one of the highest infant
21 mortality rates in the nation, and although the infant
22 mortality rate has dropped in the past several years, the
23 racial gap remains; African American babies have a mortality
24 rate double that of their white peers; and

25 WHEREAS, certified nurse midwives usually practice
26 in hospital settings after earning a nursing degree; while
27 certified professional midwives practice in a variety of

1 settings, including birth centers and homes, and go through an
2 educational program separate from nursing; and

3 WHEREAS, the state did not recognize certified
4 professional midwifery until 2017, when the Legislature
5 created the State Board of Midwifery and authorized the
6 practice of professional midwifery by licensed midwives in the
7 state; however, there are no educational programs in the state
8 that relate to the practice of professional midwifery; and

9 WHEREAS, the state recognizes the need for better
10 maternal care in the Blackbelt region, where health, safety,
11 education, and economic security lag behind the rest of the
12 state; and

13 WHEREAS, the state also recognizes the need for an
14 educational program in professional midwifery in the Blackbelt
15 region to ensure that anyone seeking to practice midwifery can
16 be trained through an accredited program and can provide an
17 alternative method of bringing much needed maternal care to
18 women of this state and reducing infant mortality; now
19 therefore,

20 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE LEGISLATURE OF
21 ALABAMA, That there is created a study commission to determine
22 the feasibility of establishing an accredited educational
23 program in professional midwifery at Wallace State Community
24 College in Selma.

25 (a) The study commission shall be comprised of the
26 following members:

27 (1) The chair of the Senate Health Committee.

1 (2) Two members appointed by the President of
2 Wallace State Community College, one with a background and
3 experience in financing and program costs and one with a
4 background and experience in curriculum.

5 (3) Two members appointed by the State Board of
6 Midwifery.

7 (4) One member appointed by the Chancellor of the
8 Alabama Community College System.

9 (5) One senator from the district that includes
10 Wallace State Community College in Selma.

11 (b) The appointing members shall coordinate their
12 appointments so that diversity of gender, race, and
13 geographical areas is reflective of the makeup of this state.

14 (c) The chair of the Senate Health Committee shall
15 serve as chair of the commission. The commission shall meet as
16 soon as practical at a time and place set by the chair. Notice
17 of the meetings of the commission shall be provided in a
18 manner consistent with the rules of the Legislature pertaining
19 to interim committees.

20 (d) In addition to studying the feasibility of
21 establishing an accredited professional midwifery program at
22 Wallace State Community College in Selma, the commission shall
23 determine the costs of such a program to the Education Trust
24 Fund, including the costs of providing scholarships to
25 eligible individuals.

1 (e) The Senate and the Legislative Services Agency
2 shall provide the necessary staff and support to the
3 commission to perform its duties.

4 (f) (1) The Legislative members of the commission
5 shall be entitled to their legislative compensation, per deim,
6 and travel expenses for each day they attend a meeting of the
7 commission in accordance with Amendment 871 of the
8 Constitution of Alabama of 1901.

9 (2) Other members of the commission may be
10 reimbursed for necessary expenses in attending meetings of the
11 commission according to policies and procedures of their
12 respective appointing authorities.

13 (g) The commission shall report its findings to the
14 Legislature, along with proposed legislation, not later than
15 October 31, 2020, at which times it shall stand dissolved.