

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-53

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

April 4, 2023

To recognize the need to continue to raise awareness around Black maternal health disparities, amplify community-driven policy and care solutions, and honor birth workers, maternal care providers, and Black maternal health advocacy groups for their selfless work; and declare April 11th to April 17th as Black Maternal Health Week in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black women in the United States are 2.6 times more likely than White women to die from pregnancy-related causes;

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

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

WHEREAS, new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has indicated that since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the maternal mortality rate for Black women has increased by 26 percent;

WHEREAS, for years, the District of Columbia has reported a maternal mortality rate well beyond the national average;

WHEREAS, according to the District's Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC), despite making up only about half of all births between 2014 and 2018, Black women made up 90 percent of birth-related deaths;

WHEREAS, according to the MMRC, residents in Wards 7 and 8 comprised 70% of pregnancy associated deaths;

WHEREAS, there is currently no hospital east of North Capitol Street in the District that has a labor and delivery department;

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WHEREAS, according to DC Health, Black mothers in the District have higher levels of preterm births than White mothers, and the highest levels of preterm births occur among residents who live in Wards 7 and 8;

WHEREAS, according to DC Health, of Black women who gave birth between 2019 and 2020, 10 percent did not initiate prenatal care until their third trimester or had none at all, and 29 percent did not initiate prenatal care until their second trimester;

WHEREAS, Black mothers experience a higher prevalence of perinatal mental health issues, including postpartum depression and anxiety;

WHEREAS, the District has launched the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force to study and make recommendations on improvements to perinatal mental health programs and treatments and methods to close gaps in care provision and coordination;

WHEREAS, a wide distribution of birth options, providers, and other resources for reproductive health care and perinatal services is critical to closing the racial gap in maternal health outcomes;

WHEREAS, the official theme for Black Maternal Health Week 2023 is Our Bodies Belong to Us: Restoring Black Autonomy and Joy!

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Black Maternal Health Week Recognition Resolution of 2023”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes the need to continue to raise awareness around Black maternal health disparities, amplify community-driven policy and care solutions, and honor birth workers, maternal care providers, and Black maternal health advocacy groups for their selfless work, and declares April 11th to April 17th as Black Maternal Health Week in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.