

Senate Resolution 489

By: Senators Jackson of the 41st, Butler of the 55th, Anderson of the 43rd, McLaurin of the 14th, Halpern of the 39th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing Black maternal health statistics; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, the United States has the highest rates of maternal mortality among higher
3 income countries. There are an estimated 700 to 900 deaths per year in the United States that
4 are pregnancy related, and another 50,000 persons suffer from severe complications; and

5 WHEREAS, the CDC estimates that 80 percent of pregnancy related deaths in the United
6 States are preventable; and

7 WHEREAS, the United States has an infant mortality rate that is higher than most higher
8 income countries. Currently, the United States is ranked 33 out of 36 countries belonging to
9 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with an average of
10 5.58 deaths per 1,000 live births; and

11 WHEREAS, racism and racial bias in healthcare systems contribute to both the national
12 maternal mortality and morbidity crisis and infant mortality and morbidity, in particular for
13 pregnant and postpartum persons and infants who are Black; and

14 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare longstanding racial and socioeconomic
15 inequities in our healthcare system; and

16 WHEREAS, one of the essential goals of the state Department of Public Health is to reduce
17 health and mental health disparities among vulnerable and underserved communities to
18 achieve health equity throughout Georgia. This essential goal should extend to health equity
19 for Black birthing people and babies; and

20 WHEREAS, Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy related
21 causes than non-Hispanic white women, and access to prenatal care, socioeconomic status,
22 and general physical health do not fully explain the disparity seen in maternal mortality and
23 morbidity rates among Black individuals, and there is a growing body of evidence that Black
24 persons are often treated unfairly and unequally in the health care system; and

25 WHEREAS, Georgia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the United States at
26 almost twice the national rate; and

27 WHEREAS, in Georgia, Black women are almost three times more likely to die from
28 pregnancy related causes than non-Hispanic white women; and

29 WHEREAS, Georgia has experienced a string of hospital labor and delivery closures across
30 the state, especially in rural areas. In 2019, 93 of the 109 rural counties in Georgia lacked
31 a hospital labor and delivery unit and 75 lacked an obstetrician-gynecologist(OB/GYN); and

32 WHEREAS, in Georgia, 34.6 percent of counties are defined as maternity care deserts
33 compared to 32.6 percent in the United States; and

34 WHEREAS, chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity,
35 and diabetes contribute to high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. In Georgia, Black
36 women have egregious above-average rates of all of these conditions, resulting in high-risk
37 pregnancies and poor maternal health outcomes.

38 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
39 recognize Black maternal health statistics and urge that improvements be made to achieve
40 health equity.

41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
42 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the public and the
43 press.