

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 19

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To designate the week of April 11-17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week.

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

WHEREAS, a recent report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that in 2021, the U.S. had one of the worst rates of maternal mortality in our nation's history; a 40% increase from 2020; and

WHEREAS, the report also found that more than 80% of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. are preventable; and

WHEREAS, the maternal death rate among black Americans is much higher than other racial groups, specifically, 2.6 times higher than the rate for white women; and

WHEREAS, black women are 55% more likely than all other women to deliver prematurely; and

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, there are multiple factors that contribute to these disparities including variations in quality health care, underlying chronic conditions, structural racism, and implicit bias; and

WHEREAS, in addition, social determinants of health prevent many people of racial and ethnic minority groups from having fair opportunities for economic, physical, and emotional health; and

WHEREAS, for there to be significant improvement in preventing pregnancy-related deaths and maternal health outcomes, a concerted effort must be made on many fronts; and

WHEREAS, communities must work together to identify and address the social factors affecting maternal health such as unstable housing, transportation access, food insecurity, substance use, violence, and racial and economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, low Medicaid reimbursement rates for maternity care services performed by OB/GYNs and midwives must be addressed to eliminate the maternity care deserts and provide life-saving care for moms and a healthy start for babies; and

WHEREAS, access to doula services and midwifery care for both publicly and privately insured women who want additional support of a myriad of options for their birthing plan is an important part of addressing maternal mortality and the severe maternal morbidity crisis; and

WHEREAS, a fair and wide distribution of resources and birth options, especially with regard to reproductive rights, reproductive healthcare services, and maternal health programming is critical to improving and closing the racial gap in maternal health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, black midwives, doulas, perinatal health workers, and community-based organizations provide holistic maternal care but often face structural and legal barriers to licensure, reimbursement, and provision of care; and

WHEREAS, the official theme of this year's Black Maternal Health Week is "Our Bodies Belong to Us: Restoring Black Autonomy and Joy", recognizing the alarming rise of maternal mortality, yet acknowledging the strength, power, and resilience of black women and birthing people and their unassailable right to live freely, safely, and joyfully.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate the week of April 11-17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE