



BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK 2024

APRIL 11-17, 2024

#BMHW24

April 11, 2024

Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, and Speaker Mike Johnson,

The 43 undersigned organizations and individuals are in full support of the 2024 Black Maternal Health Week Resolution led by Representative Alma Adams (NC-12), Representative Lauren Underwood (IL-14), Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Senator Laphonza Butler (D-CA).

This year marks the seventh anniversary of the Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) campaign. Founded and led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA), BMHW is a week of awareness, activism, and community building intended to: deepen the national conversation about Black maternal health in the US; amplify community-driven policy, research, and care solutions; center the voices of Black Mamas, women, families, and stakeholders; provide a national platform for Black-led entities and efforts on maternal health, birth and reproductive justice; and enhance community organizing on Black maternal health.

Black Maternal Health Week takes place every year from April 11 –17 and has been officially recognized by the White House for the last three years. The month of April is recognized in the United States as National Minority Health Month – a month-long initiative to advance health equity across the country on behalf of all racial and ethnic minorities. Additionally, we are joining dozens of global organizations who are fighting to end maternal mortality globally in recognizing April 11th as the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights.

The BMHW 2024 theme is ***“Our Bodies Belong **STILL** Belong to Us: Reproductive Justice **NOW!**”*** In light of the steadily alarming rise of maternal mortality in the U.S., which recent data shows has been exacerbated by the pandemic; and amidst growing cases of clear neglect in care in hospital systems immediately after labor and delivery, BMMA continues to highlight and center culturally-congruent practices with a focus on Black Midwifery care and full-spectrum Black-led Doula care as sound, evidence-based solutions. Most importantly, these are practices



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and solutions that incorporate the true needs, wants, and desires of Black women and birthing people.

The Black Maternal Health Week Resolution describes the state of the maternal health crisis in the United States, which disproportionately impacts Black women and birthing people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black women in the United States are 2.6 times more likely than white women to die from pregnancy-related causes and suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications twice as often as white women¹. The high rates of maternal mortality among Black women and birthing people span across socioeconomic levels and have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Structural racism, gender oppression, and the social determinants of health inequities contribute significantly to the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women and birthing people.

The Black Maternal Health Week Resolution also outlines solutions. It calls on Congress to enact policies grounded in the reproductive justice, birth justice, and human rights frameworks. Congress must reintroduce and pass the Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act and work to prioritize and engage Black women and birthing people in policy and program development and implementation. With the support of the undersigned organizations and of our Congressional champions, we believe we can build a world in which Black Mamas have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive before, during, and after pregnancy.

Sincerely,

Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Inc. (BMMA)

A Better Balance

All Families Birth & Wellness

American Association of Birth Centers

American College of Nurse-Midwives

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses

Atlanta Birth Center, Inc.

Atlanta Doula Collective

Baobab Birth Collective

Birth Sisters of Charlottesville

Birthing Cultural Rigor, LLC

Black Women Birthing Justice



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Bloom Collective
Center for Black Women's Wellness
Center for Reproductive Rights
CinnaMoms
Commonsense Childbirth Inc.
Caitlin R. Williams
Diversity Uplifts, Inc.
Jamaa Birth Village
Lindsey Yates, PhD
Lynn Roberts, PhD
Lucinda's House
Majaica
Mamatoto Village
Monica R. McLemore, PhD, RN, MPH
Nicole Clark Consulting, LLC
Perinatal Health Equity Initiative
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Restoring Our Own Through Transformation (ROOTT)
Sankofa Reproductive Health & Healing Center
Shafia Monroe Consulting/Birthing CHANGE
SisterLove, Inc.
SisterReach, Inc.
Sisters in Loss
SisterSong, Inc.
Southern Birth Justice Network
SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, Inc.
Speaking of Birth
Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity (SACReD)
State Innovation Exchange (SIX) Action
The Century Foundation Health Equity and Reform Team
The Melanated Mammary Atlas

¹ CDC, Division of Reproductive Health <https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/pregnancy-related-deaths/index.html>