

Mamas First Act

Sponsored by: Congresswoman Gwen Moore, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Cory Booker, Senator Bob Casey, Black Maternal Health Caucus Co-Chairs Congresswoman Lauren Underwood and Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, PhD., Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley

Endorsed by: *Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA), March of Dimes, The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP), National Birth Equity Collaborative, Commonsense Childbirth Inc., American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM), Centers for Reproductive Rights, What to Expect Project, Futures Without Violence, Seattle Indian Health Board, African American Breastfeeding Network, Momsrising, Ujima*

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States is experiencing a maternal mortality crisis among our nation's African American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native mothers who are dying at four to five times the rate of white women. In Wisconsin, the rate is even higher with African American mothers dying at over five times the rate of white women. In many hospital settings, women of color face systematic barriers and racial biases regarding delays in recognizing symptoms, not acknowledging the patient's pain, not fully elaborating on treatment options, and pushing for C-sections.

That is why I have introduced, *The Mamas First Act*, to help combat discrimination that millions of women face in our health care system by expanding access to doulas and midwives who promote patient-centered care like birthing choice and reproductive autonomy.

Every year, around four million women give birth in the U.S. and almost half of them are on Medicaid. By expanding Medicaid reimbursements to doulas and midwives, we can significantly impact maternal and infant health outcomes and disparities. This far-reaching solution adds an important tool to help our states and localities address and reduce high maternal and infant mortality rates, especially about communities of color.

Bill Summary:

The *Mamas First Act* amends the Social Security Act to allow doulas, midwives, and tribal midwives to be reimbursed by Medicaid.

- Allowing Medicaid reimbursement for doula care and midwife access would significantly improve health outcomes for mothers and babies.
- This legislation would improve access to care before, during, and after pregnancy to underserved and under-resourced communities as both doulas and midwives have been proven to reduce C-sections, decrease maternal anxiety, and improve communication between pregnant women and their health care providers.
- Expanding access to these non-clinical and health care professionals will allow all communities to access these critical services, increase the focus on culturally competent, and patient-centered care while contributing to better health outcomes.