

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 4

BY REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL

SPECIAL DAY/WEEK/MONTH: Recognizes the week of April 11 through 17, 2023, as  
Black Maternal Health Week

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To recognize the week of April 11 through 17, 2023, as the sixth annual Black Maternal  
3 Health Week.

4 WHEREAS, the high rates of maternal mortality among Black women span across  
5 income levels; education levels; and socioeconomic status; the maternal death rate among  
6 Black Americans is much higher than other racial groups, specifically, 26 times higher than  
7 the rate for White women; and

8 WHEREAS, a recent report released by the Centers for Disease Control indicates that  
9 in 2021, the U.S. had one of the worst rates of maternal mortality in the nation’s history; a  
10 40% increase from 2020; Black women are 55% more likely than all other women to deliver  
11 prematurely; structural racism, gendered oppression, and the social determinants of health  
12 contribute to the high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women; and

13 WHEREAS, the Black community must have access to adequate housing;  
14 transportation equity; nutritious food; environments free from toxins; fair treatment within  
15 the criminal justice system; safety and freedom from violence; equal economic opportunity  
16 and also quality, respectful, comprehensive, and affordable health care; and

17 WHEREAS, there is serious concern about improving access to dignified, quality  
18 maternal healthcare across the state; increasing access to doula care services for publicly and  
19 privately insured women is paramount; low Medicaid reimbursement rates for maternity care  
20 services performed by OB-GYNs and midwives must be addressed to eliminate the state’s

1 maternity care deserts and to provide life-saving care for moms, and a healthy start for  
2 babies; and

3 WHEREAS, improving access to birthing options such as doula care and midwifery  
4 care for those who want additional support is important to addressing our state's maternal  
5 mortality and severe maternal morbidity crisis; and

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

9 WHEREAS, Black midwives, doulas, perinatal health workers, and  
10 community-based organizations provide holistic maternal care but face structural and legal  
11 barriers to licensure, reimbursement, and provision of care; this year's theme, Our Bodies  
12 Belong to Us: Restoring Black Autonomy and Joy, speaks to strength, power, and resilience,  
13 and the unassailable right to live freely, safely, and joyfully.

14 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the  
15 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize April 11 through 17, 2023, as Black  
16 Maternal Health Week to address this health disparity through direct policy action intended  
17 to prevent maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women and birthing persons.

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#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HR 4 Original

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Designates April 11-17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week.