

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 4

BY REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL

A RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, there is serious concern about improving access to dignified, quality maternal health care across the state; increasing access to doula care services for publicly and privately insured women is paramount; low Medicaid reimbursement rates for maternity care services performed by OB-GYNs and midwives must be addressed to eliminate the state's maternity care deserts and to provide life-saving care for moms and a healthy start for babies; and

WHEREAS, improving access to birthing options such as doula care and midwifery care for those who want additional support is important to addressing our state's maternal mortality and 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 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 face structural and legal barriers to licensure, reimbursement, and provision of care; this year's theme, Our Bodies Belong to Us: Restoring Black Autonomy and Joy, speaks to strength, power, resilience, and the unassailable right to live freely, safely, and joyfully.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES