

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 19

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

LEGIS POWERS/FUNCTIONS. Designates the week of April 11-17, 2023, as Black Maternal Health Week.

1 A RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 emotional health; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

