

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 89

BY SENATOR CARTER

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for decreasing regulatory barriers for free-standing birth centers in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Louisiana has one of the highest incidences of maternal mortality and preterm births in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has limited obstetric health care in rural areas, where often there are no obstetric providers and no hospitals or birth centers offering obstetric care; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's maternal mortality rate of over fifty-eight deaths per one hundred thousand births is the highest in the United States, with sixty-eight percent of maternal deaths deemed preventable; and

WHEREAS, over thirty percent of Louisiana is considered a maternity desert with little to no access to maternal care, affecting over two million women in Louisiana of childbearing age and almost one hundred fifty thousand Louisiana babies; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's maternal mortality rates are four times higher for black women, with fifty-nine percent of black maternal deaths deemed preventable while nine percent of white maternal deaths were deemed preventable; and

WHEREAS, a free-standing birth center is a facility, separate from a hospital, that provides a home-like setting where midwives provide family-centered care to healthy pregnant women; and

WHEREAS, these centers provide prenatal and postnatal care and natural delivery services for females who have had a low risk, normal pregnancy and that are expected to have an uncomplicated labor and normal delivery; and

WHEREAS, regulatory complexities represent a significant barrier to entry for new birth centers and a substantial administrative strain on existing centers; and

WHEREAS, removing structural barriers by modernizing birth center licensing regulations can address the issue of inequitable access to the birth center model of care.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby request the Louisiana Department of Health to work with stakeholders, including but not limited to the Louisiana State Nurses Association, Louisiana Hospital Association, administrators of free-standing birth centers, and the state senator for Senate District 7, to develop a plan for decreasing regulatory barriers for free-standing birth centers in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE