

Rep. Alma Adams & Sen. Kamala Harris Introduce Black Maternal Health Week Resolution

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To: Steve Johnston



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Over 60 Members of Congress join resolution to raise national awareness of the state of Black maternal health in the United States.

Charlotte – **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), Senator Kamala Harris (CA)**, and over 60 cosponsors have introduced a resolution recognizing Black Maternal Health Week, “to bring national attention to the United States maternal health crisis in the Black community and the importance of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women and birthing persons.” **Black Maternal Health Week is observed from April 11 through April 17.**

“This resolution says, unequivocally, that Black Moms matter,” said **Representative Adams, co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.** “I’m proud to stand with my colleagues to raise awareness of Black Maternal Health Week, and urge our Congressional leaders to take action on one of the greatest public health crises of our time.”

“The potential ramifications that could come with giving birth during the coronavirus pandemic — specifically a pandemic that is disproportionately impacting African Americans — is of particular concern to Black women who were already facing a maternal health crisis in our country,” said **Senator Harris.** “Now more than ever, we need to address this issue. During Black Maternal Health Week, we must continue in the fight to ensure Black women are taken seriously when they speak about their health concerns, and remove disparities and implicit bias from our health care system.”

[A copy of the resolution is available here.](#)

As of press time, the resolution is cosponsored by 65 members of Congress, including Jesús G. "Chuy" García (IL-04), Adam Smith (WA-09), Frederica Wilson (FL-24), Donald Beyer (VA-08), Robin L. Kelly (IL-02), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11), Donald M. Payne, Jr. (NJ-10), Terri A. Sewell (AL-07), Tom Suozzi (NY-03), Ayanna Pressley (MA-07), Alcee L. Hastings (FL-20), Stacey E. Plaskett (VI-AL), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), Jerry McNerney (CA-09), Lauren Underwood (IL-14), Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01), Eliot L. Engel (NY-16), David Trone (MD-06), Joseph D. Morelle (NY-25), Kathy Castor (FL-14), Jackie Speier (CA-14), Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18), Karen Bass (CA-37), David Scott (GA-13), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30), Joyce Beatty (OH-03), Deb Haaland (NM-01), Donna Shalala (FL-27), Grace Meng (NY-6), Nydia M. Velázquez (NY-07), Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Gwen Moore (WI-

04), G. K. Butterfield (NC-01), Mike Doyle (PA-18), Barbara Lee (CA-13), Debbie Dingell (MI-12), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23), Mary Gay Scanlon (PA-05), Bennie Thompson (MS-02), Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (GA-04), Eliot Engel (NY-16), Haley Stevens (MI-11), Nanette Barragán (CA-44), Joseph P. Kennedy, III (MA-04), Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-02), Jamie Raskin (MD-08), John Lewis (GA-05), Steve Cohen (TN-9), Abigail Spanberger (VA-7), John B. Larson (CT-1), Joe Neguse (CO-2), Cedric Richmond (LA-02), Grace Napolitano (CA-32), Angie Craig (MN-02), Rosa DeLauro (CT-3), Yvette Clarke (NY-9), Judy Chu (CA-27), Sheila Jackson Lee (TX-18), Raul Grijalva (AZ-3), Tony Cardenas (CA-29), Juan Vargas (CA-51), Ro Khanna (CA-17) and Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-AL).

Supporters of the resolution include the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Center for Reproductive Rights, Jamila K. Taylor Ph.D. Director of Health Care Reform and Senior Fellow for the Century Foundation, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Center for Health and Gender Equity, Every Mother Counts, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, March for Moms, National Birth Equity Collaborative, National Black Midwives Alliance, National Medical Association, National Partnership for Women & Families, National Women's Law Center, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Southern Birth Justice Network, WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, Black Women's Health Imperative, Commonsense Childbirth, and the National Perinatal Taskforce.

"Black Maternal Health Week is an important opportunity to bring national attention to the maternal mortality crisis facing Black women," **said Dr. Jamila Taylor, Director of Health Care Reform and Senior Fellow for the Century Foundation.** This is a year like no other, as we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, an emergency that is endangering the health and economic well-being of millions and having a particularly harmful--and deadly--impact on the Black community. Sadly, we know the maternal mortality crisis and COVID-19 disparities share a common underlying force: racism and structural inequality. Now is the time to address those evils in this country once and for all and do all that we can to ensure health equity along racial lines."

"The Center for Reproductive Rights applauds Senator Kamala Harris and Congresswoman Alma Adams on the introduction of this year's Black Maternal Health Week Resolution. Now more than ever we need recognition of this crisis and federal solutions to save the lives of Black mothers," **said Jennifer Jacoby, Federal Policy Counsel for CRR.**

Breana Lipscomb, Senior Manager, U.S. Maternal Health and Rights Initiative, and BMMA Board Member added, "The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that chronic underinvestment in the public health infrastructure is deadly and Black people pay the price. This year's resolution is a call to action, reminding us that in this time of crisis we cannot sacrifice the human rights of birthing people."

"The Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA) thanks Senator Harris and Congresswoman Adams for their continued support and amplification of Black Maternal Health Week (#BMHW20)," **said Angela D. Aina, Interim Executive Director of BMMA.** "As the founders of #BMHW20, BMMA believes that the experiences, voices, and maternity care work of Black women must be centered in order to address the U.S. maternal health crisis - hence the importance of recognizing April 11th - 17th as Black Maternal Health Week!"

On Thursday, Rep. Adams is hosting a Symposium on Black Maternal Health during COVID-19. [Members of the public and the press can register here.](#)

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