

Reps. Adams, Underwood & Sen. Booker Introduce Black Maternal Health Week Resolution



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Date 2021-04-12 15:04



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Over 77 Members of Congress join resolution to raise national awareness of the state of Black maternal health in the United States.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), Congresswoman Lauren Underwood (IL-14), and 77 original cosponsors have introduced a resolution recognizing Black Maternal Health Week, “to bring national attention to the maternal health crisis in the United States and the urgent 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.**

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

[Additionally, an advocacy kit for interested parties is available here.](#)

“Our yearly Black Maternal Health Week resolution says, unequivocally, that Black Moms matter,” **said Congresswoman Adams, co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.** “Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen all too clearly the racial and ethnic disparities in health care. Black Americans were one of the hardest

hit communities during this pandemic, and Black and Hispanic mothers accounted for a majority of COVID-19 cases among pregnant women in the United States. That is why it is so important for us to raise awareness of Black Maternal Health Week and the maternal mortality and morbidity epidemic Black mothers face, and urge our Congressional and state leaders to take action on one of the greatest public health crises of our time.”

“As it stands, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of all developed nations, a crisis that puts Black birthing people especially at risk,” **said Senator Booker**. “By taking meaningful steps to address the disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes, we can save lives. That is why I am incredibly proud to be working alongside Representatives Alma Adams and Lauren Underwood in introducing the 2021 Black Maternal Health Week resolution recognizing the week of April 11 to April 17 as Black Maternal Health Week and compelling us to act to confront this crisis that is killing American mothers.”

“I am proud to join Congresswoman Adams, Senator Booker, and Black Maternal Health Caucus leaders to mark the beginning of Black Maternal Health Week 2021. Since the first Black Maternal Health Week four years ago, we’ve made great progress together on behalf of Black mothers across the United States. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Black Maternal Health Caucus and Black maternal health champions across the country to save lives, end disparities, and achieve true equity and justice for all,” **said Congresswoman Lauren Underwood (IL-14), co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus**.

Congressional co-sponsors include **Representatives Nanette Diaz Barragán (CA-44), Karen Bass (CA-37), Joyce Beatty (OH-03), Sanford Bishop (GA-02), Earl Blumenauer (OR-03), Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-01), Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01), Carolyn Bourdeaux (GA-07), Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D (NY-16), Anthony Brown (MD-04), Cori Bush (MO-01), G. K. Butterfield (NC-01), Tony Cárdenas (CA-29), André Carson (IN-07), Kathy Castor (FL-14), Judy Chu (CA-27), David N. Cicilline (RI-01), Steve Cohen (TN-09), Gerald Connolly (VA-11), Jason Crow (CO-06), Danny K. Davis (IL-07), Madeleine Dean (PA-04), Diana DeGette (CO-01), Mike Doyle (PA-18), Dwight Evans (PA-03), Lois Frankel (FL-21), Ruben Gallego (AZ-07), Raúl M. Grijalva (AZ-03), Jahana Hayes (CT-05), Brian Higgins (NY-26), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-AL), Steven Horsford (NV-04), Sara Jacobs (CA-53), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30), Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (GA-04), Robin L. Kelly (IL-02), Ro Khanna (CA-17), Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-02), Ann**

McLane Kuster (NH-02), John Larson (CT-01), Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14), Al Lawson (FL-05), Barbara Lee (CA-13), Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-12), Kathy Manning (NC-06), Donald M. McEachin (VA-04), Jerry McNerney (CA-09), Gregory W. Meeks (NY-05), Grace Meng (NY-06), Gwen Moore (WI-04), Joseph D. Morelle (NY-25), Seth Moulton (MA-06), Marie Newman (IL-03), Ilhan Omar (MN-05), Donald M. Payne, Jr. (NJ-10), Stacey Plaskett (VI-AL), Ayanna Pressley (MA-07), David Price (NC-04), Jamie Raskin (MD-08), Tim Ryan (OH-13), Mary Gay Scanlon (PA-05), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), Terri A. Sewell (AL-07), Albio Sires (NJ-08), Adam Smith (WA-09), Jackie Speier (CA-14), Haley Stevens (MI-11), Marilyn Strickland (WA-10), Tom Suozzi (NY-03), Rashida Tlaib (MI-13), David Trone (MD-06), Nydia Velázquez (NY-07), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23), Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12), Peter Welch (VT-AL), Nikema Williams (GA-05), and Frederica S. Wilson (FL-24).

The resolution is endorsed by Black Mamas Matter Alliance, National Birth Equity Collaborative, Center for Reproductive Rights, National Medical Association, March of Dimes, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, MomsRising, American Public Health Association, Mamatoto Village, 1,000 Days, Ancient Song Doula Services, Lamaze International, National Urban League, National WIC Association, and more than [120 other organizations listed here](#).

Co-founding Executive Director of Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Angela Doyinsola Aina, said, “We are so excited to have the support of Representative Adams, Representative Underwood, and Senator Booker for the introduction of this year’s Black Maternal Health Week Resolution. Since 2018, each year this resolution helps to grow awareness of the experience Black birthing people face before, during, and after birth. The staggering statistics of maternal mortality and morbidity, of which Black women experience among the highest in the nation are still the reality. During this week, we take time to remember the Black women lost due to pregnancy-related and associated complications, yet also uplift the leaders and Black-led organizations working to change future outcomes for Black Mamas and their babies.”

“The truth about Black Maternal Health Week is that it’s every week for Black women across America,” **stated Dr. Joia Crear Perry, President and Founder of the National Birth Equity Collaborative, trained obstetrician and gynecologist, and Black Mamas Matter Alliance advisory board member,** “We’ve always had the solutions to the Black

maternal health crisis within our own communities, but little buy-in from those in power. This week is when our allies and counterparts recognize and celebrate the work that we Black women do to save Black mamas.”

“This year’s Black Maternal Health Week resolution is expansive and game-changing—a manifesto outlining the multiple and intersecting factors that impact the ability of Black women to birth safely and to do so with dignity and respect,” **said Dr. Jamila Taylor, director of health care reform and senior fellow at the think tank The Century Foundation.** “Black Maternal Health Week is a time to pause and not only acknowledge the plight of Black mothers and birthing people, but also to reflect on meaningful solutions and hold space for Black women leaders who are charting the course for the way forward. Despite significant challenges, I remain hopeful for the day that Black women aren’t needlessly dying of preventable pregnancy-related causes, and our communities are able to be safe and thrive.”

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D., is serving her fourth full term in Congress. She represents the 12th District of North Carolina, which includes parts of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. In 2018, she introduced the first Black Maternal Health Week resolution with then-Senator **Kamala Harris**. In 2019, she co-founded the Black Maternal Health Caucus with **Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14)**. In March 2020, Adams, along with Harris and Underwood, introduced the ***Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act*** for the first time, and in February 2021 reintroduced an expanded version of the package with **Senator Cory Booker**. Adams is a mother of two and a grandmother of four.

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