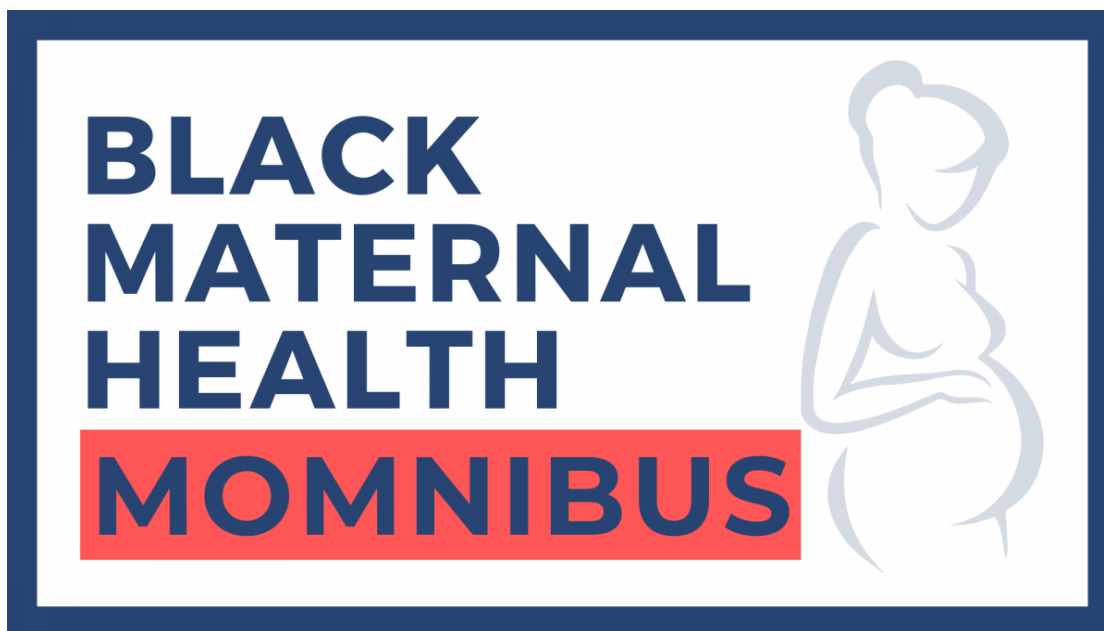


First Black Maternal Health Momnibus Bill Heads to President Biden's Desk



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Adams Celebrates Passage of the *Protecting Moms Who Served Act*

The legislation is the first piece of the Momnibus package to reach President Biden's desk

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12), co-founder and Co-Chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus**, celebrated the House passage of S. 796, the ***Protecting Moms Who Served Act of 2021***, by submitting remarks in support of the bill to the Congressional Record. The legislation is the first bill from the ***Black Maternal Health Momnibus*** to pass both houses of Congress and head to President Biden's desk.

About the Momnibus

The ***Momnibus***, which includes the ***Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 (H.R. 959/S. 346)***, is a 12 bill package that was reintroduced in February 2021 by Underwood, Adams, and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ). The ***Momnibus*** builds on existing maternal health legislation with 12 bills to comprehensively address the clinical and non-clinical drivers of the maternal health crisis in the United States. The Momnibus makes critical investments in addressing social determinants of health, funding community-based

organizations, growing and diversifying the perinatal workforce, and improving data collection processes. The Momnibus also includes new legislation to address the impacts of COVID-19 and climate change on maternal and infant health outcomes.

Many critical pieces of the *Momnibus* bill package were included in the *Build Back Better Act* under consideration in the House.

Congresswoman Adams' Remarks as Submitted to the Congressional Record

Madam Speaker -

I rise today to speak in strong support of the bipartisan legislation, Protecting Moms Who Served Act.

But before I do, I want to thank Congresswoman Lauren Underwood for her leadership on this bill. I would also like to thank Senator Duckworth and Representatives Julia Brownley, Gus Bilirakis, and Brian Fitzpatrick for their co-leadership.

Together, Congresswoman Underwood and I are the co-founders and co-chairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, as well as lead sponsors of the Momnibus – comprehensive legislation that addresses every dimension of the maternal health crisis in the United States.

And it gives me great joy to say that the Protecting Moms Who Served Act will be the first bill of the Momnibus to pass in Congress.

The United States continues to have the highest maternal mortality rates in the developed world. Women and birthing people of color die during or after pregnancy at 3 to 4 times the rates of their white counterparts.

For the nearly 2 million women Veterans, maternal health outcomes are not any better. Pregnant and postpartum women who served face unique maternal health risks that deserve our attention.

For example, the risk of pregnancy complications may be higher for women Veterans receiving maternity care through Veterans Affairs, since these women frequently have multiple medical conditions that can increase pregnancy complications.

Furthermore, it is suggested that military deployment may increase the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. A post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis can increase the risk of spontaneous pre-term birth, preeclampsia, or gestational diabetes.

Women Veterans with more symptoms of PTSD or moral injury like shame, guilt, or demoralization, are also at greater risk for postpartum depression in the three years following the end of their military service.

More specifically a study on the impacts of PTSD or moral injury, found that one in two women Veterans who became pregnant during the study, had a negative pregnancy outcome.

These outcomes include postpartum depression or anxiety, miscarriage, obstetrical medical conditions, emergency c-sections, the baby's need for intensive care post-delivery, preterm birth, stillbirth, and ectopic or tubal pregnancy.

Our women Veterans have upheld their duty to serve and protect and, we as Members of Congress must do the same.

The Protecting Moms Who Served Act bill will codify and strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs maternity care coordination programs to ensure Veterans receive the high-quality maternal health care and support they have earned.

This is a noteworthy advancement since maternity care coordination programs are associated with improved maternal and birth outcomes, increased use of beneficial health services, and decreased costs, especially among women with chronic or pregnancy-related physical or mental health conditions, or social vulnerabilities.

Additionally, this bill will commission the first-ever comprehensive study of America's maternal health crisis among women Veterans, with a particular emphasis on racial and ethnic disparities.

This study is needed to provide further understanding of the maternal health challenges experienced among women who served.

On May 12th, this legislation passed the house with unanimous bipartisan support.

Today, we are here to vote once more and finally send this bill to the President's desk, changing the lives of millions of women Veterans and their children.

Let's remember that strong and supportive healthcare for birthing people supports the future of our nation by investing in the well-being of children and families.

And today's vote ensures a healthcare system for women Veterans that will offer the best maternal care available.

I am proud to see our progress towards ending maternal mortality and disparities among our moms who served. I look forward to continuing to address these issues in Congress as we examine and discuss the maternal mortality and morbidity issues that threaten our nation.

To all my colleagues - lets pass the Protecting Moms Who Served Act for our women Veterans, their children, and their families.

What we do here today will live beyond our time in Congress and impact generations of women who serve.

It is time we make sure that Veterans, who have done so much for our country, receive the support and resources they need.

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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