

Adams Op-Ed Highlights White House Maternal Health Day of Action



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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, *QCity Metro* published an editorial by Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12) that highlights the issues addressed by the White House’s [Maternal Health Day of Action Summit](#). In the editorial, Rep. Adams outlines how the ***Black Maternal Health Momnibus*** provisions included in the ***Build Back Better Act*** will save lives and improve outcomes across the country, as well as the role Vice President Kamala Harris and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood played in making the inclusion of the *Momnibus* a reality.

“Thanks in large part to Vice President Kamala Harris, the Build Back Better Act [includes] all eligible provisions of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act to address our country’s maternal health crisis,” wrote Congresswoman Adams. “Black women in America die in childbirth at three times the rate of white women. Even though 60% of maternal deaths are preventable, our nation is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of maternal mortality is worse than it was 25 years ago. Tens of thousands more women experience ‘near misses,’ or pregnancy-related complications that are traumatizing and endanger the life of the mother and/or child.”

[The full editorial is available here](#), and below:

Why we need to pass the Build Back Better Act

Among the bill's many features is a provision to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, an issue which disproportionately affects Black women.

The Build Back Better Act passed by the House is many things: a jobs bill; an expansion of the social safety net; a down payment on a long-overdue investment in the fight against climate change.

It will also save lives.

While the bill's investments in job creation, affordable housing, and lowering the cost of childcare are well-known, investments in Medicaid, reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, and pandemic preparedness haven't gained as much attention.

In states that haven't expanded Medicaid, the bill will close the Medicaid coverage gap and cover as many as 4 million uninsured Americans. According to the Center for American Progress, closing the Medicaid gap could save up to 7,000 additional lives every year, while reducing medical debt by \$2 billion and preventing almost 50,000 evictions per year. It also provides a year of continuous eligibility to children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP and expands access to behavioral health services.

Thanks in large part to Vice President Kamala Harris, the Build Back Better Act also includes all eligible provisions of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act to address our country's maternal health crisis.

Black women in America die in childbirth at three times the rate of white women. Even though 60% of maternal deaths are preventable, our nation is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of maternal mortality is worse than it was 25 years ago. Tens of thousands more women experience "near misses," or pregnancy-related complications that are traumatizing and endanger the life of the mother and/or child.

My daughter was one of those near misses, and you might be surprised to learn that both Beyoncé and Serena Williams both faced major complications in childbirth as well. I've spoken with countless women who know either a survivor or a victim of the maternal health crisis or survived it themselves. It transcends education levels, wealth, and insurance status; it can happen to anyone.

To address this crisis, the Build Back Better Act takes the proven, life-saving step of expanding Medicaid for 12 months for post-

partum individuals. Additionally, the Momnibus provisions in Build Back Better invest in addressing social determinants of health that influence maternal health outcomes; invest in Historically Black Colleges and Universities to train culturally competent health professionals; and address the effects of COVID-19 and climate change on mothers.

Last week, I was proud to join Vice President Harris and Rep. Lauren Underwood at the White House as President Biden signed the first Momnibus bill, the Protecting Moms Who Served Act, into law. However, we can't stop there: Black mamas, children, and parents experiencing the maternal health crisis don't have time to wait for us to pass the Build Back Better Act. That's why I joined the Vice President, Rep. Underwood, and other stakeholders at the White House today to reiterate our call for the passage of the bill.

Finally, the Build Back Batter Act addresses the COVID-19 pandemic and future pandemics by investing \$10 billion to improve pandemic preparedness and strengthen our supply chains and the Strategic National Stockpile. We've already lost almost 800,000 Americans to COVID-19; we can't allow the next pandemic to take more loved ones from us.

Right before the pandemic shut down the world, the father of my children passed away. Because of the coronavirus I lost so many opportunities to share time with my family and grieve with them in the way I would have wanted to.

As the pandemic progressed, numerous friends and mentors of mine passed due to the pandemic and other ailments, and I missed the opportunity to mourn them and share how their memories continue to bless my life. All of us felt that pain as we lost hundreds of thousands of our neighbors to COVID-19 and lost the opportunity to celebrate the deceased.

That is all to say that we should honor the dead by investing in the living. On Thursday, I joined Vice President Harris and Secretary Pete Buttigieg to voice our support for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and I am proud to have voted for a bill that will create jobs, solve critical supply chain issues, and build the physical infrastructure that will take the United States into the 21st Century.

However, we need to pass the Build Back Better Act so that those good jobs are part of a long, fulfilling life. Expanding Medicaid, addressing maternal mortality head-on, investing in preparedness to fight future pandemics, ending child hunger and funding children's health programs, mitigating the worst effects of climate change: these measures will improve quality of life and save lives

for decades to come.

Scripture tells us not to love in word or talk but in deeds and in truth. The Build Back Better Act will save lives and improve livelihoods. American families can't wait.

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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