

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



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Over 110 Members of Congress join resolutions to raise national awareness of the state of Black maternal health in the United States.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12) and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood (IL-14) in the House, as well as Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) in the Senate, have introduced companion resolutions 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.” The House resolution has 94 original cosponsors; the Senate resolution has 16 original cosponsors.

Black Maternal Health Week is observed from April 11 through April 17.

The resolution underscores the disproportionate health complications suffered by Black birthing people during pregnancy who face maternal morbidities three times as often as their white counterparts due to structural racism and gender oppression in maternal health care experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these inequities, with data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicating that the maternal mortality rate for Black women

has increased by 26% since the pandemic began. In order to reverse these alarming trends, the resolution calls on Congress to “support and encourage policies grounded in the human rights, reproductive justice, and birth justice frameworks that address Black maternal health inequity.”

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

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

"This week we are lifting up the voices of Black women who are doing the critical work of eliminating maternal health disparities and creating a world where maternal justice and equality are a reality," **said Congresswoman Adams, co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.** "In 2018, I was honored to introduce the first Congressional resolution recognizing Black Maternal Health Week with then-Senator Kamala Harris. In 2019, I asked the youngest Black woman elected to Congress, Lauren Underwood, if she wanted to launch a Congressional Caucus focused on Black maternal health. So, we launched the Black Maternal Health Caucus, which now boasts 115 bipartisan Members of Congress. In 2020, we introduced the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act – a package of 12 bills to comprehensively address existing gaps in policy solutions to the maternal health crisis. The bill was crafted with Black women, by Black women and for Black women. Last year, we re-introduced the Momnibus, and passed the first bill from the package. I'm so excited to continue this work in this Congress, because Black mamas can't wait."

“Our nation is experiencing a maternal mortality crisis,” **said Sen. Booker.** “The United States has one of the highest maternal mortality rates of any wealthy nations, which has rapidly increased during the past years and continues to disproportionately impact Black birthing people who more often encounter the systemic inequalities of our broken health care system. To improve Black maternal health outcomes, this resolution calls on Congress to implement a comprehensive approach that provides Black communities with economic support, environmental justice, and access to high-quality, affordable health care. I was proud to once again work with Representatives Adams and Underwood on this resolution and reaffirm my commitment to address this urgent and critical issue.”

“The maternal health crisis demands urgent attention and serious action to save lives and advance birth equity across the country,” **said Congresswoman Underwood, co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.** “In 2019, I co-founded the Black Maternal Health Caucus with Congresswoman Alma Adams to respond to this crisis and advocate for evidence-based solutions that will end disparities. I’m thrilled to introduce this resolution with Congresswoman Adams and Senator Booker to recognize Black Maternal Health Week 2022, which elevates Black maternal health as a national priority and emphasizes the need to reduce maternal

mortality and achieve maternal health justice.”

In addition to Adams and Underwood, congressional co-sponsors include **Representatives A. Donald McEachin, Adam Smith, Al Lawson, Albio Sires, Ami Bera, M.D., Andy Levin, Ann McLane Kuster, Anthony G. Brown, Ayanna Pressley, Barbara Lee, Bennie G. Thompson, Betty McCollum, Bobby L. Rush, Bonnie Watson Coleman, Brenda L. Lawrence, Brian Higgins, Carolyn B. Maloney, Carolyn Bourdeaux, Chris Pappas, Danny K. Davis, Darren Soto, David E. Price, David N. Cicilline, David Scott, David Trone, Debbie Dingell, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Deborah K. Ross, Donald M. Payne, Jr., Eddie Bernice Johnson, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Emanuel Cleaver, II, Frederica S. Wilson, G.K. Butterfield, Gerald E. Connolly, Grace Meng, Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, Gregory W. Meeks, Gwen Moore, Haley Stevens, Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr., Ilhan Omar, Jackie Speier, Jahana Hayes, Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D., Jamie Raskin, Jan Schakowsky, Jason Crow, Jim Cooper, John B Larson, John Garamendi, Karen Bass, Kathy Castor, Kathy Manning, Linda T. Sánchez, Lisa Blunt Rochester, Lloyd Doggett, Lori Trahan, Lucy McBath, Madeleine Dean, Marc Veasey, Marie Newman, Marilyn Strickland, Mary Gay Scanlon, Melanie Stansbury, Mike Doyle, Mondaire Jones, Nanette Diaz Barragán, Nikema Williams, Nydia M. Velázquez, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Rashida Tlaib, Raul M. Grijalva, Raul Ruiz. M.D., Rep. Jerrold Nadler, Rick Larsen, Ro Khanna, Robin L. Kelly, Ruben Gallego, Sara Jacobs, Seth Moulton, Sharice L. Davids, Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, Shontel Brown, Stacey E. Plaskett, Suzanne Bonamici, Terri A. Sewell, Tim Ryan, Tony Cárdenas, Troy A. Carter, Sr., Veronica Escobar, William R. Keating, and Yvette D. Clarke.**

The White House has also issued [a proclamation supporting Black Maternal Health Week](#).

Black Mamas Matter Alliance, and March of Dimes are two of the supporters of the resolution.

“The Black Maternal Health field has expanded significantly since the first Black Maternal Health Week launched back in 2018. I am so proud of the work that BMMA, our partners, and collaborators have led to create a demonstrable impact on behalf of Black women and birthing people’s maternal and reproductive rights,” **said Angela D. Aina, Executive Director of Black Mamas Matter Alliance.** “Still, there is so much more to be done to address the startling statistics and realities facing Black expectant individuals. As we celebrate Black Maternal Health Week, and continue to champion the reproductive rights and health equity of all Black birthing people, we hope our collective efforts will create even more transformative change for generations to come.”

“March of Dimes commends Representatives Alma Adams, Lauren Underwood and Senator Cory Booker for spearheading this year’s *Black Maternal Health Week Resolution* and their efforts to address the alarming state of Black maternal health,” **said Stacey D. Stewart,**

President and CEO of the March of Dimes. “In the U.S., Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes and 50 percent more likely to have a preterm birth as compared to White women. It is past time we address the structural racism and inequities in social determinants of health that contribute so significantly to the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women.”

In addition to Booker, the resolution is cosponsored in the Senate by: **Senators Merkley (D-OR), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ed Markey (D-MA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Gary Peters (D-MI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), and Jacky Rosen (D-NV).**

[A full list of organizations supporting the resolution can be found here.](#)

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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