



Kira Johnson Act

H.R. 6144

BACKGROUND

On April 12th, 2016, Kira Johnson checked into a hospital with her husband Charles to give birth to their second child, Langston. Kira – an entrepreneur, world traveler, mother of one healthy boy already, and a Black woman – did not make it out alive. Despite being in excellent health, Kira died from a hemorrhage approximately 12 hours after delivering Langston. Kira deserved better, and so do the Black mothers across the United States who are dying at disproportionately high rates.¹

Although the maternal mortality crisis for Black women in the United States is disturbing, it is not hopeless: in communities all across the country, there are Black women-led organizations working tirelessly to ensure that moms do not lose their lives in an attempt to bring life into the world. The **Kira Johnson Act** makes investments in the Black community by funding community-based organizations that are leading the charge to protect moms. The bill also supports bias and racism training programs, research, and the establishment of Respectful Maternity Care Compliance Offices to address bias and racism, and to promote accountability in maternity care settings.

BILL SUMMARY

The **Kira Johnson Act** will:

1. Provide **funding for community-based organizations – particularly organizations led by Black women** – to improve Black maternal health outcomes through programs that:
 - Support women with **maternal mental health conditions and substance use disorders**.
 - Address **social determinants of health** like housing, transportation, and nutrition.
 - Promote **health literacy and education** in the prenatal and postpartum periods.
 - Provide support from **doulas and other perinatal health workers** throughout pregnancy and up to one year after birth.
2. Provide funding for grant programs to implement and study **consistent bias, racism, and discrimination trainings for all employees in maternity care settings**.
3. Provide funding to **establish Respectful Maternity Care Compliance Offices** within hospitals to provide mechanisms for pregnant and postpartum patients to report instances of disrespect or evidence of racial, ethnic, or other types of bias and promote accountability.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths](#)

COSPONSORS

The **Kira Johnson Act** is led by Congresswoman Alma S. Adams. The bill is cosponsored by Representatives Lauren Underwood, Terri Sewell, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Mary Gay Scanlon, Gwen Moore, Wm. Lacy Clay, Ro Khanna, Karen Bass, and Al Lawson.

ENDORSEMENTS

The **Kira Johnson Act** is endorsed by more than 50 organizations, including the:

- Black Mamas Matter Alliance
- Black Women's Health Imperative
- National Birth Equity Collaborative
- Mamatoto Village Inc
- Ancient Song Doula Service
- National Perinatal Task Force
- Commonsense Childbirth
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- Families USA
- American Public Health Association
- Every Mother Counts
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- 1,000 Days
- MomsRising
- Mom Congress
- American Association of Birth Center
- National WIC Association
- First Focus Campaign for Children
- American College of Physicians
- African American Breastfeeding Network
- Children's HealthWatch
- National Association of Professional and Peer Lactation Supporters of Color (NAPPLSC)
- Society for Public Health Education
- AllianceChicago
- A Better Balance
- Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
- Atlanta Doula Collective, and more.

CONTACT

For more information or to cosponsor the bill, contact Jack DiMatteo in Rep. Underwood's office at Jack.DiMatteo@mail.house.gov or Kichelle Webster in Rep. Adams' office at Kichelle.Webster@mail.house.gov