



# Perinatal Workforce Act

H.R. 6164

## BACKGROUND

In the last 25 years, while pregnancy-related mortality ratios fell 44 percent around the world, the American maternal mortality rate actually increased: moms are now more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes in the United States than in any other high-income country in the world.<sup>1</sup> The situation is even worse for Black women, who are three to four times more likely to die from giving birth than their white counterparts.<sup>2</sup>

While the causes of the crisis are complex, one driving force is a lack of access to maternity care, and to culturally congruent maternity care specifically. More than one-third of U.S. counties are “maternity care deserts,” with no hospitals offering obstetric care and zero obstetric providers.<sup>3</sup> Maternity care access is limited in both rural and urban communities: more than one million American women live in maternity care deserts located in large metropolitan areas or urban settings.<sup>4</sup>

One solution to this glaring shortage is to grow and diversify the perinatal health workforce. The **Perinatal Workforce Act** establishes grant programs to increase the number of maternity care providers and other perinatal health workers who offer culturally congruent support to women throughout their pregnancies, labor and delivery, and the postpartum period. We must ensure that no matter where a mom lives, she can receive quality care and support from people she trusts.

## BILL SUMMARY

The **Perinatal Workforce Act** will:

1. Call on the Secretary of Health and Human Services to (1) provide guidance to states on the promotion of **diverse maternity care teams** and (2) to study how **culturally congruent maternity care** promotes better outcomes for moms, especially minority women.
2. Provide funding to **establish and scale programs that will grow and diversify the maternal health workforce**, increasing the number of nurses, physician assistants, and other perinatal health workers like doulas, community health workers, lactation consultants, and peer supporters who moms can trust throughout their pregnancies, labor and delivery, and the postpartum period.
3. Study the **barriers that prevent women – particularly low-income and minority women – from entering maternity care professions.**

<sup>1</sup> National Institutes of Health Office of Research on Women’s Health: [Maternal Morbidity and Mortality](#)

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System](#)

<sup>3</sup> March of Dimes: [Nowhere to Go](#)

<sup>4</sup> March of Dimes: [Nowhere to Go](#)

## COSPONSORS

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

## ENDORSEMENTS

The **Perinatal Workforce Act** is endorsed by more than 50 organizations, including the:

- Black Mamas Matter Alliance
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM)
- Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
- 1,000 Days
- American College of Physicians
- Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA)
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- American Organization for Nursing Leadership
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
- National Perinatal Task Force
- Commonsense Childbirth
- Mamatoto Village Inc
- Ancient Song Doula Services
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- National Birth Equity Collaborative
- Black Women's Health Imperative
- Every Mother Counts
- Families USA
- American Association of Birth Centers
- National WIC Association
- African American Breastfeeding Network
- American Public Health Association
- First Focus Campaign for Children
- MomsRising
- National Association of Professional and Peer Lactation Supporters of Color (NAPPLSC)
- Mom Congress
- California Breastfeeding Coalition, and more.

## CONTACT

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