

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1444

Acknowledging and thanking America’s birth centers for their high quality and high value model of health care, and expressing support for the recognition of the week of September 14 through 20, 2024, as “National Birth Center Week”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

Mrs. KIM of California (for herself and Ms. KELLY of Illinois) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

RESOLUTION

Acknowledging and thanking America’s birth centers for their high quality and high value model of health care, and expressing support for the recognition of the week of September 14 through 20, 2024, as “National Birth Center Week”.

Whereas a birth center is a freestanding health care facility where safe, midwifery-led care supports the processes of birth, newborn, and parent transition, as well as communitywide wellness;

Whereas birth centers are a key part of the health care system and are guided by the principles of safety, prevention, patient and family centered care, sensitivity, appro-

priate medical intervention, shared decisionmaking, and cost effectiveness;

Whereas over 400 birth centers across the United States provide patient and family centered health care that includes a broad range of services such as wellness exams, prenatal care, childbirth and postpartum care, newborn exams, STI screenings and treatments, contraceptive care, and family building services;

Whereas birth centers are based on the midwifery model of care which combines millennia of childbearing knowledge with modern technology and skills;

Whereas 60 percent of mothers giving birth in the United States meet risk criteria for birth center care;

Whereas the safety and efficacy of midwifery-led community birth centers have been repeatedly documented over four decades, and two large-scale national birth centers' studies published in 1989 and 2013 documented safe and cost-effective care in birth centers;

Whereas, in 2019, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-funded, five-year Strong Start Initiative demonstrated that birth center care significantly reduces preterm and low-birthweight births and cesarean section rates, and increases breastfeeding rates and duration for Medicaid beneficiaries, leading to better health and high value for childbearing women and infants;

Whereas a 2020 study demonstrated that rural families cared for in birth centers, including those who transferred to higher levels of care, had lower incidences of episiotomy, cesarean birth, and induction, and had higher rates of exclusive breastfeeding, higher average birthweight in pounds and higher Apgar scores at five minutes;

Whereas the number of families seeking community birth continues to grow, and according to National Vital Statistics Reports, between 2019 and 2022, there was a 33.2-percent increase in families opting to give birth in community settings, including a 51.5-percent increase for Black families, a 57-percent increase for Native American families, a 51.5-percent increase for Hispanic families, and a 28-percent increase for White and Asian families;

Whereas a 2022 research study found that community birth centers, especially those providing culturally centered care, enhance the experience of perinatal care for patients and families in rural, minority, and underserved communities;

Whereas birth centers based on the midwifery model of care are indisputable solutions to the ongoing crisis in the United States perinatal care system, a system which ranks poorly in comparison to other high-resource countries and suffers from multiple disparities in rural, minority, and underserved communities;

Whereas every person deserves access to a birth center, and the public deserves to understand the demonstrated effectiveness of freestanding birth center care that is led by midwives and governed by the midwifery model of care; and

Whereas, in order to support these efforts, the week of September 14 through 20, 2024, would be appropriate to celebrate midwifery-led community birth, to create opportunities to grow birth centers and their safe and effective model of care, and to imagine a world where birth is safe, sacred, loving, and celebrated in every community: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) acknowledges the safe, high value, family
3 centered care being provided in America’s birth cen-
4 ters;

5 (2) recognizes National Birth Center Week and
6 encourages families, communities, health care and
7 public health professionals, hospitals and health care
8 institutions, health care insurers, policymakers and
9 regulatory agencies at all levels of government, and
10 philanthropic leaders to take this time to learn more
11 about the safety and effectiveness of birth centers
12 and the midwifery model of care; and

13 (3) thanks America’s birth centers and supports
14 increased use of the birth center model to expand
15 access to high-quality care and improve perinatal
16 outcomes for families across the United States.

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