

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 395

Recognizing the work and contributions of doulas towards improving pregnancy, birth, and postpartum outcomes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 11, 2023

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (for herself and Ms. PRESSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the work and contributions of doulas towards improving pregnancy, birth, and postpartum outcomes.

Whereas doulas can play an important role in—

- (1) maternal health;
- (2) maternal mental health; and
- (3) reducing maternal mortality and morbidity in the United States;

Whereas doula support includes continuous non-clinical 1-on-1 emotional, physical, and informational support during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum;

Whereas doulas empower mothers with information about pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, breast feeding, and infant care;

Whereas doulas can speak up for and serve as navigators for mothers during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and postpartum;

Whereas studies have shown that doula-assisted mothers are 4 times less likely to have a low-birth weight baby, and 2 times less likely to experience complications during pregnancy;

Whereas continuous doula support has been shown to shorten the duration of labor and delivery;

Whereas research indicates that, with the support of doulas, women are—

- (1) more likely to have spontaneous vaginal births;
- (2) less likely to require epidural anesthesia and other interventions; and
- (3) less likely to experience postpartum depression or another postpartum mood and anxiety disorder;

Whereas the Expert Panel on Improving Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services from 2013, and the recommendations for Maternal Health and Infant Health Quality Improvement in Medicaid from 2020, identified providing coverage for continuous doula support during labor as a potential strategy to enhance maternal and infant care management;

Whereas the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine reported that the continuous presence of a doula during pregnancy is one of the most effective tools to improve labor and delivery outcomes;

Whereas the presence of a doula during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum helps foster shared decision making for birthing women by facilitating communication between women and their providers;

Whereas the presence of a doula can provide vital emotional and physical support after a stillbirth;

Whereas a doula can provide pregnant and postpartum women and their partners with critical information about urgent maternal warning signs, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

Whereas a doula provides continuous support during labor and delivery and can alert hospital staff to signs and symptoms of complications that require immediate medical attention, thus lowering the risk of escalating complications for the mother and baby;

Whereas access to doula support services, especially in underserved communities, may contribute to—

- (1) improved birth outcomes, both physically and emotionally; and
- (2) lower health care costs by reducing the risk of—
 - (A) low-birth weight babies;
 - (B) complications that might otherwise go unnoticed;
 - (C) primary and repeat cesarean deliveries; and
 - (D) epidural anesthesia and other interventions;

Whereas training members of underserved communities, including rural areas, to become doulas and support mothers in their own communities can—

- (1) help provide employment opportunities for improving maternal health; and

(2) build trust and reduce adverse consequences of racial bias for pregnant and postpartum women of color; and

Whereas community-based maternal health care models, including doula support services, in collaboration with obstetrical care, show great promise in improving, and reducing disparities in, maternal health outcomes: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the important role of doulas in
3 providing respectful, responsive care to all women,
4 including women in underserved communities, in-
5 cluding rural areas, who lack access to maternal
6 health services;

7 (2) acknowledges that doula support services
8 provide continuous physical and emotional support
9 to help mothers achieve healthy pregnancies and safe
10 deliveries and recoveries;

11 (3) urges greater recognition for the important
12 role that doulas play in—

13 (A) supporting improved pregnancy, birth,
14 and postpartum experiences and outcomes, in-
15 cluding maternal mental health;

16 (B) reducing health care costs and working
17 towards the elimination of health disparities;
18 and

1 (C) overcoming barriers for assisting low-
2 income women of color and women in rural
3 areas with access to health and social supports;
4 (4) recognizing the Doula Week to raise aware-
5 ness about, and advocate for the benefits of, doulas
6 and the support services doulas provide; and
7 (5) recognizes the importance of access to doula
8 support services, especially in underserved commu-
9 nities.

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