

Mama's First Act

Sponsored by: Congresswoman Gwen Moore, Senator Warren, Senator Booker, Senator Padilla, Senator Heinrich, Senator Blumenthal, and Senator Duckworth

Endorsed by: Ujima, The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community, the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice, the National Health Law Program, HealthConnect One, BMMA Inc. (Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Incorporated), Futures Without Violence, Every Mother Counts, the American Association of Birth Centers, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, the National Partnership for Women and Families, Birth Center Equity, Families USA, and the What to Expect Project.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [National Council of Urban Indian Health](#), the United States is experiencing a maternal mortality crisis among our nation's African American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native mothers who are dying at **four to five times the rate** of white women due to complications related to pregnancy. In many health care settings, women of color face [systematic barriers and racial biases](#) regarding delays in recognizing symptoms, not acknowledging the patient's pain, not fully elaborating on treatment options, and pushing for C-sections.

The Mamas First Act would help combat discrimination that millions of women face in our health care system by expanding access to doulas, midwives, and lactation support providers who promote patient-centered care like birthing choice and reproductive autonomy.

Every year, around [four million](#) women give birth in the U.S. and [almost half](#) of them are on Medicaid. By expanding Medicaid reimbursements to doulas, midwives, and lactation support providers, we can significantly improve maternal and infant health outcomes and address disparities. This far-reaching solution adds an important tool to help our states and localities address and reduce high maternal and infant mortality rates, especially in communities of color.

Bill Summary:

The *Mamas First Act* amends the Social Security Act to allow doulas, midwives, tribal midwives, and lactation support providers to be reimbursed by Medicaid.

- Allowing Medicaid reimbursement for doula care, midwife access, and lactation support would significantly improve health outcomes for mothers and babies.
- This legislation would improve access to care before, during, and after pregnancy to underserved and under-resourced communities as both doulas and midwives have been proven to reduce C-sections, decrease maternal anxiety, and improve communication between pregnant women and their health care providers.
- Expanding access to these health care professionals will allow all communities to access the critical services they provide, increase the focus on culturally competent, patient-centered care, and contribute to better health outcomes.