

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 161

BY REPRESENTATIVE WALTERS

A RESOLUTION

To designate April 11-17, 2026, as Black Maternal Health Week in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Black Maternal Health Week was founded and is led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance to build awareness, activism, and community-driven solutions to improve Black maternal health outcomes and is observed annually from April 11-17; and

WHEREAS, Black women in the United States continue to experience disproportionately high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, regardless of income or education, due to systemic inequities, implicit bias, and gaps in access to quality care; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, maternal health outcomes reflect significant disparities and pregnancy-related mortality rates remain among the highest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has consistently ranked among the worst states in the nation for maternal health outcomes, which underscores the urgency for targeted intervention and sustained policy action; and

WHEREAS, Black women in Louisiana are approximately two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women, which reflects persistent racial disparities in health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the leading causes of pregnancy-related death include cardiovascular conditions, hemorrhage, and complications associated with chronic health conditions, and the majority of pregnancy-related deaths in Louisiana are considered preventable; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana experiences elevated rates of severe maternal morbidity, including life-threatening complications during pregnancy and childbirth, which disproportionately impact Black women; and

WHEREAS, social determinants of health, including access to prenatal and postpartum care, insurance coverage, transportation, and provider bias, contribute significantly to adverse maternal health outcomes across the state; and

WHEREAS, culturally competent, community-centered care models, including the integration of doulas, midwives, and community health workers, have proven essential in improving maternal and infant health outcomes, particularly for Black families; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana-based organizations, health care providers, doulas, midwives, and advocates continue to play a critical role in advancing equity, improving outcomes, and supporting families before, during, and after pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, observing Black Maternal Health Week serves as an opportunity to amplify the voices of Black mothers, recognize community leadership, and recommit to policies and investments that ensure safe, respectful, and equitable maternal healthcare for all.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate April 11- 17, 2026, as Black Maternal Health Week in Louisiana; does hereby commend the work of community-based organizations, health care providers, and advocates across Louisiana for their dedication to improving maternal health outcomes and advancing equity; does hereby affirm its commitment to supporting policies, programs, and partnerships that eliminate maternal health disparities and ensure that every mother in Louisiana has access to high-quality, culturally competent care; and does hereby encourage continued public-private partnerships, data-driven strategies, and innovative care delivery models that expand access, improve outcomes, and strengthen accountability across Louisiana's maternal health system.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES