

Talking Points

Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act

National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Message

NCJW is committed to the ultimate moral imperative of protecting every single person's health and speaking up in the face of inequities plaguing the most vulnerable communities in our country. The **Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021** (HR 959/S 346) — reintroduced as a package by Reps. Lauren Underwood (D-IL) and Alma Adams (D-NC) and Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and as twelve individual bills by members of the Black Maternal Health Caucus — is a comprehensive initiative to address the tragic health disparities faced by women and birthing people of color. **NCJW supports the swift passage of the Momnibus Act to protect mothers everywhere.**

- **Women and birthing people of color are in crisis.** The United States, the richest nation in the world, holds the grim distinction of the highest maternal death rate amongst developed nations, with Black moms dying of pregnancy complications at three to four times the rate of their white counterparts. Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has similarly demonstrated that rates of maternal mortality amongst American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are also higher than those for white women. This horrific disparity is the direct result of systemic racism ingrained in medicine and policy that places the health and wellness of birthing people of color as inferior to that of white people.
- **The Momnibus Act would ensure drastic, much-needed change.** The CDC has confirmed that sixty percent of all pregnancy-related deaths can be prevented with improved access to and better quality health care, communication, and support. The Momnibus is composed of twelve bills that aim to do just this, addressing every aspect of the maternal health crisis and targeting specific communities with particular needs such as incarcerated individuals, pregnant and postpartum veterans, and those living in underserved areas. Critical provisions include improving data collection processes and quality measures to better understand the causes of the maternal health crisis; providing funding to community-based organizations that are working to improve maternal health outcomes; making critical investments in social determinants of health that influence maternal health outcomes, like housing, transportation, and nutrition; and investing in digital tools like telehealth to improve maternal health outcomes in underserved areas.
- **The Jewish value of *achrayut*, or social responsibility, morally obligates us to protect every single person's health and right injustices that currently exist.** As Jews, we have a sacred duty to speak out against racist systems, structures, speech, and action, and to work towards a more just future. We must end racial disparities in maternal health because safe, equitable, affordable care is a basic human right, not a privilege, and birthing people of color deserve wellness, dignity, and equal access to comprehensive, high-quality, culturally-competent services. NCJW supports the Momnibus Act as a means to this end, moving us closer to a world where all can access the family planning, reproductive, sexual health, and maternal health care they need.