

House Resolution 1248

By: Representatives Clark of the 108th, Thomas of the 56th, Hutchinson of the 107th, Hugley of the 136th, Bennett of the 94th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the House Study Committee on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African
2 Americans; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, among 35 of the world's wealthiest nations, the United States ranks
4 thirty-second in infant mortality; and

5 WHEREAS, according to research by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, low birth
6 weight is a significant factor in infant death, and the number of low birth weight babies born
7 in the United States is increasing at a rate greater than in comparable countries, based largely
8 on the unsettling data on African American infants; and

9 WHEREAS, African American infants are now more than twice as likely to die as white
10 infants, with 11 out of 1,000 African American infants dying compared to five out of every
11 1,000 white infants, which results in more than 4,000 African American infants lost
12 unnecessarily each year; and

13 WHEREAS, based on a survey of United States government data, racial disparity in infant
14 mortality rates is astonishingly wider now than it was in 1850, 13 years before the signing
15 of the Emancipation Proclamation; and

16 WHEREAS, the United States is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of
17 maternal mortality, the death of a woman related to pregnancy or childbirth, is worse now
18 than it was 25 years ago, with an estimated 700 to 900 maternal deaths occurring annually;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
21 African American women are three to four times as likely to die from pregnancy-related
22 causes as their white counterparts; and

23 WHEREAS, studies over the past 25 years show that education and income are not key
24 determinants in this alarming trend, as an African American woman with an advanced
25 college degree is more likely to lose her baby than a white woman with less than an
26 eighth-grade education; and

27 WHEREAS, recently there has been a growing acknowledgment among researchers and
28 healthcare professionals that the debilitating effects of societal and systemic racism have
29 created a toxic physiological stress for African American women, causing health problems
30 such as hypertension and pre-eclampsia that directly lead to higher rates of infant and
31 maternal death that are more reflective of the lived experience of race in this country than the
32 genetics of race; and

33 WHEREAS, researchers have also indicated that there is a pervasive, long-standing racial
34 bias in healthcare that results in the dismissal of legitimate concerns and symptoms of
35 African American women during pregnancy, which may result in misdiagnosis of conditions
36 that can be fatal to the mother and infant; and

37 WHEREAS, national attention is now being given to the undeniable inequality and racial
38 disparity in infant and maternal birth outcomes, and despite access to prenatal healthcare,
39 African American infants are more than twice as likely to die as white infants, with more
40 than 12 African American infant deaths per 1,000 live births as compared to five white infant
41 deaths per 1,000 live births in Georgia, the worst ranking in the United States; and

42 WHEREAS, these outcomes are utterly reprehensible, and immediate action should be taken
43 to address the racial disparity in maternal and child health outcomes and the alarming rate
44 of mortality for African American infants and mothers in Georgia.

45 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

46 (1) **Creation of House study committee.** There is created the House Study Committee
47 on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans.

48 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of five members of the
49 House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
50 Representatives. The Speaker shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson
51 of the committee.

52 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
53 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
54 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

55 (4) **Meetings.** The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee
56 may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or
57 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and
58 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

59 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive
60 the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
61 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
62 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
63 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
64 appropriated to the House of Representatives.

65 (6) **Report.**

66 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
67 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file a report of the
68 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
69 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

70 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
71 proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C)
72 of this paragraph.

73 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
74 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
75 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
76 the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

77 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Clerk of the
78 House of Representatives a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu
79 thereof.

80 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2020.