

House Resolution 426

By: Representatives Schofield of the 63rd, Jackson of the 68th, Davis of the 87th, Cannon of the 58th, Burnough of the 77th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the General Assembly to support the creation of a Black Maternal Health Caucus; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the United States has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality among
4 high-income countries, with approximately 700 to 900 pregnancy related deaths per year; and

5 WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 80
6 percent of pregnancy related deaths in the United States are preventable; and

7 WHEREAS, the United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates among
8 high-income countries, currently ranking 33 out of 36 countries belonging to the
9 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with an average of 5.58
10 deaths per 1,000 live births; and

11 WHEREAS, there is a growing body of evidence that racism and racial bias in healthcare
12 systems contribute to the national maternal mortality and morbidity crisis and infant
13 mortality and morbidity, in particular for Black pregnant and postpartum women and infants;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, in the United States, Black women are three to four times more likely to die of
16 pregnancy related causes than non-Hispanic white women, which is a disparity that cannot
17 be fully explained by differences in access to prenatal care, socioeconomic status, and
18 general physical health; and

19 WHEREAS, a key objective of the Georgia Department of Public Health is to reduce health
20 and mental health disparities among vulnerable and underserved communities and to achieve
21 health equity throughout Georgia, which should include health equity for Black pregnant
22 women and infants; and

23 WHEREAS, statistics have shown that Georgia has one of the highest maternal mortality
24 rates in the United States at almost twice the national rate; and

25 WHEREAS, in Georgia, Black women are almost three times more likely to die of pregnancy
26 related causes than non-Hispanic white women; and

27 WHEREAS, Georgia has experienced a string of hospital labor and delivery closures across
28 the state, especially in rural areas; and

29 WHEREAS, in Georgia, 34.6 percent of counties are defined as maternity care deserts,
30 compared to 32.6 percent in the United States; and

31 WHEREAS, chronic health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity,
32 and diabetes, contribute to high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, and, in Georgia,
33 Black women have egregious above-average rates of all of these conditions, resulting in
34 high-risk pregnancies and poor maternal health outcomes; and

35 WHEREAS, Medicaid coverage for doula care during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum is
36 linked to improved maternal and infant health outcomes, as doula-assisted mothers were four
37 times less likely to have a baby with low birth weight, two times less likely to experience a
38 birth complication for the mother or infant, and significantly more likely to initiate
39 breastfeeding; and

40 WHEREAS, access to quality prenatal, perinatal, and postpartum care is essential to
41 improving Black maternal health outcomes and reducing preventable maternal deaths; and

42 WHEREAS, the establishment of a dedicated Georgia legislative Black Maternal Health
43 Caucus will provide the necessary framework to research, develop, and recommend
44 evidence-based policies and programs to improve maternal health in Georgia; and

45 WHEREAS, the establishment of a Georgia legislative Black Maternal Health Caucus will
46 serve as a coalition of members dedicated to increasing awareness and raising issues related
47 to poor maternal health outcomes and disparities among Black women, including
48 disproportionately high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality compared to their white
49 counterparts.

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
51 the members of this body urge the General Assembly to create a Georgia legislative Black
52 Maternal Health Caucus as a venue for members to organize around Georgia's maternal
53 health crisis and advance policy solutions to improve maternal health outcomes and end
54 disparities.

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
56 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
57 public and the press.