

Senate Resolution 398

By: Senators James of the 28th, Rhett of the 33rd, Orrock of the 36th, Mallow of the 2nd, Esteves of the 35th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing March 14, 2025, as Black Midwives Day; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, Black Midwives have made invaluable contributions to maternal and infant
3 health in Georgia, providing critical care and advocating for better health outcomes for Black
4 birthing people and their families; and

5 WHEREAS, Black Midwives Day is recognized nationally on March 14 as a day to
6 acknowledge the historical legacy, present-day contributions, and future impact of Black
7 Midwives; and

8 WHEREAS, Georgia Black Midwives, including UmmSalaamah Abdullah-Zaimah, Corrinna
9 Edwards, Lynette Pye, Marsha Ford, Angelina Ruffin, Nar Sanders, Jasmine Bradfield,
10 Chasity Efunranti Osunjuade Millen, Bethany Erby, Chief Shaman Tomecas, and Robin
11 Gause, as well as Black apprentice and student midwives Ayana Garrick, Ayla Nicole
12 Chayil, Sainteté Martinez, Naticia Taylor, and Tahaira James, exemplify the importance of
13 midwifery in addressing disparities in maternal healthcare by bridging Georgia's rich Black
14 Midwifery legacy with the present-day care and services they provide in out-of-hospital
15 birthing communities; and

16 WHEREAS, the Accreditation Commission of Community Midwives Education and
17 Certification is the first Black-led midwifery accreditation and credentialing body dedicated
18 to endorsing, recognizing, and building educational pathways to certify experienced
19 community midwives with a focus on excellence in midwifery as a public health service and
20 ensuring the health, welfare, and safety of the communities they serve; and

21 WHEREAS, the Alliance of Certified Community Midwives collaborates with existing
22 midwifery agencies, credentialing bodies, and state departments of public health to increase
23 access to midwives and healthcare in urban and rural birth deserts as well as takes action to
24 improve outcomes and establish Georgia as a nationwide model for the Community Midwife
25 Model of Care; and

26 WHEREAS, Bellies to Babies Foundation, a Georgia nonprofit organization founded by
27 Black Midwives and the original Black-led and founded Community Doula, Community
28 Birth Assistant, and Community Midwife training and credentialing program and the creation
29 of the Certified Community Midwife, Certified Community Doula, and the Certified
30 Community Birth Assistant, endorses community doulas and community student midwives
31 from Doula of the Divine Agency and Ubuntu Wellness Academy Doulas for their dedication
32 and commitment to continuing their training and experience while serving Georgia's most
33 vulnerable population, considering systemic racism has greatly contributed to the high Black
34 maternal mortality rates; and

35 WHEREAS, Black student midwives are the future of midwifery and have the lived
36 experience today of the student midwife with barriers to accessing quality instructors, quality
37 training programs and apprenticeships, and pathways to legally practice midwifery upon
38 completion of their training; and

39 WHEREAS, Black student midwives have faced hardship, bias, bullying, and a lack of
40 support in credentialing through a pathway similar to their ancestors or the midwives who
41 have mentored them, who also have faced hardship due to the eradication of the Black
42 Midwife with restrictive laws and gatekeeping in the industry; and

43 WHEREAS, there were 43,000 midwives across the Southeast serving all families, which
44 was reduced to just a few per state by the 1980s due to changes in the departments of public
45 health; and

46 WHEREAS, Black Midwives serving out-of-hospital are increasing in numbers and proving
47 to have better outcomes than hospitals, similar to the Black Midwives who were serving in
48 out-of-hospital settings in the past, who had better outcomes than physicians; and

49 WHEREAS, Black Midwives serving their communities need reimbursement, access to
50 resources, and access to certifying and recognition for their unique training pathway so that
51 more Georgia families can access midwifery care and choose a midwife from their own
52 community who understands their culture, religion, languages spoken, and lives in the same
53 zip code; and

54 WHEREAS, Black Midwives serving out-of-hospital are needed in higher numbers to reduce
55 Black maternal mortality as a proven model of care; and

56 WHEREAS, this day is intended to increase attention for the state of Black maternal health
57 in the United States, the root causes of poor maternal health outcomes, and for
58 community-driven policies, programs, and care solutions; and

59 WHEREAS, Georgia is experiencing a maternity care desert crisis, in which women of
60 childbearing age live in maternity care deserts where they do not have access to hospitals or
61 birth centers offering maternity care or obstetric providers; and

62 WHEREAS, maternity care deserts lead to higher risks of maternal morbidity and mortality
63 as most complications occur in the postpartum period when birthing people are far away
64 from their providers; and

65 WHEREAS, incorporating midwives fully into the Georgia maternity care system would
66 reduce maternal health disparities and help to address the maternity care desert crisis; and

67 WHEREAS, despite the medicalization of childbirth in the United States, maternal mortality
68 rates in the United States are among the highest in high-income countries, increasing rapidly
69 and disproportionately higher among Black birthing people in Georgia and across the
70 country.

71 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
72 recognize March 14, 2025, as Black Midwives Day in honor of the longstanding and
73 invaluable contributions of Black Midwives to maternal and infant health in Georgia.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
75 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the public and the
76 press.