

SB 65 - NANCY SKINNER

# CALIFORNIA

# MOMNIBUS

RE-IMAGINING MATERNAL HEALTH

**CALIFORNIA HAS LED THE WAY IN REDUCING MATERNAL DEATHS IN THE COUNTRY, HOWEVER WE KNOW THAT WE CAN DO BETTER. SB 65, CALIFORNIA'S MOMNIBUS BILL IS RE-IMAGINING MATERNAL HEALTH, WITH THE IDEA OF HOW CAN ALL BIRTHING PEOPLE HAVE A JOYOUS, HEALTHY PREGNANCY AND DELIVERY.**

## **THE GOAL OF SB 65 IS TO:**

- Improve perinatal outcomes;
- Close racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity; and
- improve data collection and research on socioeconomic factors that contribute to negative birth outcomes.

## **THE ISSUE:**

The United States has the highest rates of maternal mortality among higher-income countries. An estimated 700 deaths per year in U.S. are pregnancy-related, with about 3 in 5 deemed preventable. In addition, the United States has a higher infant mortality rate than most higher-income countries. It is currently ranked 33 out of 36 countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in infant mortality, with an average of 5.7 deaths per 1000 live births.

Although California has reduced the rates of maternal mortality over the past 30 years, mortality and morbidity for Black and Indigenous/Native American pregnant people, women, and infants remain

remain considerably higher than the state's average. Research points to structural racism, as well as socioeconomic factors contributing to the racial and geographic disparities seen in birthing outcomes of people of color.

Between 2011 and 2013 Black women ratio of death is 26.4 per 100,000, almost 3.8 times higher than white women. Meanwhile, California's infant mortality rate is 4.2 per 1000 live births, lower than the national average of 5.7. However, again a closer look at the numbers demonstrates sharp racial disparities. Indigenous/ Native American infants in California die at a rate of 11.7 per 1000 live births, followed by Black infants who die at a rate of 8.7 per 1000 live births.

Pregnant and postpartum people who are Black, Indigenous/Native American, and/or people of color, also face mistreatment at hospitals at higher rates than their white counterparts.

Higher numbers of Black, Asian and Pacific Islander pregnant and postpartum people report unfair treatment, harsh language, and rough handling during their labor/delivery

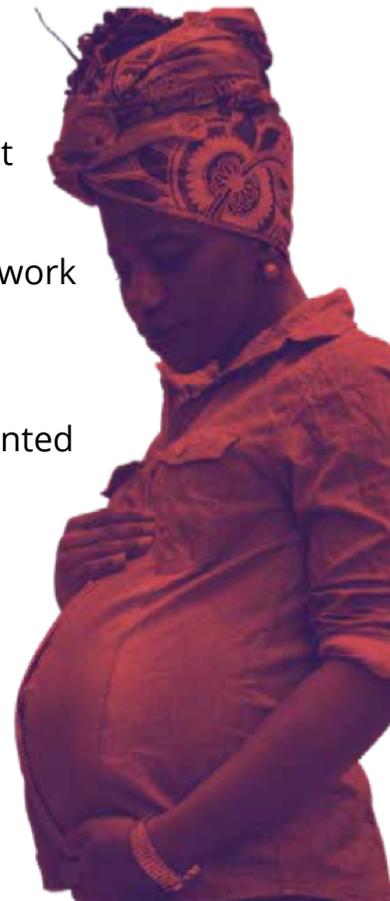
hospital stay, as compared to white pregnant and postpartum people. Higher numbers of pregnant and postpartum people who speak an Asian Language or Spanish at home, report unfair treatment during their labor/delivery hospital stay, as compared to pregnant and postpartum people who speak primarily English at home.

In addition, California is heading towards a maternal health crisis, with critical shortages in maternity providers by 2025. Currently California has 9 counties that do not have a OBGYNs.

Furthermore, California only has two nurse midwifery programs and one direct entry midwifery program approved by their respective state licensing boards. Without additional support, it is becoming increasingly difficult for these programs to expand the midwifery workforce in California to meet the demand in maternity care deserts and low access areas.

## **SOLUTIONS:**

1. Codify and expand powers and protections for California's Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Committee while also looking specifically at: racial and socioeconomic disparities; Queer, Trans, and Gender Non-Conforming birthing outcomes; and making recommendations for best practices.
2. Update the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review process to better collect information about deaths and prevent them in the future.
3. Clarify that pregnant people are exempt from CalWORKS welfare-to-work requirements.
4. Build the midwifery workforce by establishing a fund for midwifery education programs that prioritize admitting people from underrepresented groups and underserved communities.
5. Establish a stakeholder workgroup to aid in implementation of the new Medi-Cal doula benefit set to take effect next year.



## The bill is authored by Senator Skinner

### Sponsors:

- Black Women for Wellness Action Project
- California Nurse Midwives Association
- March of Dimes
- NARAL Pro-Choice California
- National Health Law Program
- Western Center on Law and Poverty
- Women's Foundation of California | Dr. Beatriz María Solís Policy Institute

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