
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 278 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY CURRY, CEPHAS, MAYES, PROBST, POWELL,
R. MACKENZIE, SANCHEZ, MADDEN, FREEMAN, STEELE, HILL-EVANS,
CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, GIRAL, McNEILL, HANBIDGE AND MERSKI,
DECEMBER 8, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, DECEMBER 8, 2023

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating January 23, 2024, as "Maternal Health Awareness Day"
2 in Pennsylvania to recognize all the women and birthing
3 people who die from complications of pregnancy or childbirth.

4 WHEREAS, Women and birthing people who die during pregnancy,
5 or within one year after giving birth, from any cause related to
6 or aggravated by the pregnancy are considered to have died a
7 pregnancy-related death; and

8 WHEREAS, The number of pregnancy-related deaths in the United
9 States has continued to rise, despite recent advances in medical
10 science and technology; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1986, the Centers for Disease Control and
12 Prevention implemented a Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance
13 System, a national surveillance system, to obtain information
14 about the frequency and causes of pregnancy-related death in the
15 United States; and

16 WHEREAS, Despite declines in the maternal mortality rate in
17 other parts of the world, the data collected under the Pregnancy

1 Mortality Surveillance System has shown a steady increase in the
2 maternal mortality rate in the United States, from a low of 7.2
3 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 15.9, 17.3 and 18
4 deaths per 100,000 in 2012, 2013 and 2014, respectively; and

5 WHEREAS, The national Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System
6 indicates that the rate of pregnancy-related deaths varies by
7 race, ethnicity and age, with Black women and birthing people
8 having the highest mortality rate at more than 40 deaths per
9 every 100,000 live births; and

10 WHEREAS, The most recent data available on the maternal
11 mortality rate in Pennsylvania indicates an overall pregnancy-
12 associated mortality ratio of 82 deaths per 100,000 live births;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Black women and birthing people in Pennsylvania are
15 two times more likely to experience pregnancy-related mortality
16 with a maternal mortality rate of 163 deaths per 100,000 live
17 births and are two to three times more likely to experience
18 pregnancy-related mortality nationally; and

19 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
20 recommends maternal deaths be investigated through state-based
21 reviews to identify the causes of pregnancy-related deaths and
22 recommend ways to decrease maternal death rates; and

23 WHEREAS, The General Assembly approved and the Governor
24 signed Act 24 of 2018, known as the Maternal Mortality Review
25 Act, establishing the multidisciplinary Maternal Mortality
26 Review Committee, as a first step to address the serious issue
27 of increasing maternal mortality across this Commonwealth; and

28 WHEREAS, The committee is tasked with examining pregnancy-
29 related deaths, developing prevention recommendations and
30 increasing public and professional awareness of the incidence of

1 pregnancy-related deaths and strategies to prevent maternal
2 deaths in this Commonwealth; and

3 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Black Maternal Health Caucus was
4 formed in October 2023 to address the disturbing trends of Black
5 maternal mortality and morbidity in this Commonwealth; and

6 WHEREAS, In order to improve public and professional
7 awareness and promote the various promising initiatives to
8 reduce the maternal mortality rate, it is both reasonable and
9 appropriate to designate a day as "Maternal Health Awareness
10 Day" in this Commonwealth and invite community members and
11 health care professionals to participate in appropriate
12 activities relating to maternal health, safety and mortality;
13 therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate January
15 23, 2024, as "Maternal Health Awareness Day" in Pennsylvania to
16 recognize all the women and birthing people who die from
17 complications of pregnancy or childbirth.