

May 11, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations committed to improving the health of women and families, we write to urge you to hold a vote on S. 1112, the bipartisan *Maternal Health Accountability Act*, in honor of Mother's Day. This legislation addresses a national public health crisis: the rising rates of maternal mortality across the United States.

More women in the United States die from pregnancy complications than in any other developed country, and the rate of maternal deaths continues to rise.^{i,ii} Black women are disproportionately impacted by this disturbing trend and are almost four times more likely to die from a pregnancy-associated cause than white women.ⁱⁱⁱ The current opioid epidemic also plays a role in maternal mortality rates. In a growing number of states, suicide and overdose are the leading causes of maternal mortality.^{iv,v}

Congress can address this crisis by supporting the work of state maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs). MMRCs are interdisciplinary groups of local experts in maternal, infant, and public health that examine maternal death cases and identify locally-relevant ways to prevent future deaths. S. 1112, a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) supports the development and support of state MMRCs through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Mother's Day should be a time for families to celebrate, not mourn the heartbreaking and premature loss of a mom from a pregnancy-associated death. Understanding what is causing these tragic events is critical to saving mothers' lives in the future. As Mother's Day approaches, America's mothers and families deserve this commitment to public health. We urge you to hold a vote on S. 1112 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
2020 Mom
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
American Academy of Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
APS Foundation of America, Inc

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Black Mamas Matter Alliance
Black Women's Health Imperative
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Community Catalyst
Every Mother Counts
Expecting Health, Genetic Alliance
First Focus Campaign for Children
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Hand to Hold
Health Resources in Action
Human Rights Watch
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Jewish Women International
Lamaze International
M.E.N.D. (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death)
March for Moms
March of Dimes
Maternal and Child Health Access
Maternova Inc.
McLeod Perinatal Systems Outreach
Medicines360
MomsRising
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Birth Equity Collaborative
National Blood Clot Alliance
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Nurse-Family Partnership
PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Power to Decide, the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy
Preeclampsia Foundation
PremieWorld, LLC
Prevention Institute.org

Public Health Solutions
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
SCAD (Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection) Alliance
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Reproductive Investigation
Stony Brook University Midwifery Dept.
The Breastfeeding Boosters of Jackson, Nobles, and Cottonwood Counties
The Center for Reproductive Rights
The Shane Foundation
The Tara Hansen Foundation
The Tatia Oden French Memorial Foundation
Unexpected Project
United Methodist Women
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
ZERO TO THREE

Cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito

ⁱ Murray JL, Wang H, Kassebaum N. Sharp Decline in Maternal and Child Deaths Globally, New Data Show. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. University of Washington. 2016.

ⁱⁱ MacDorman M, Declercq E, Cabral H, Morton C. Is the United States Maternal Mortality Rate Increasing? Disentangling trends from measurement issues: Short title: U.S. Maternal Mortality Trends. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2016 Sep; 128(3): 447-455.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pms.html>

^{iv} Report from Maternal Mortality Review Committees: A View into Their Critical Role. CDC Foundation. February 2017. Available at: <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/sites/default/files/upload/pdf/MMRIReport.pdf>

^v Metz TD, Rovner P, Hoffman MC, Allshouse AA, Beckwith KM, Binswanger IA. Maternal Deaths from Suicide and Overdose in Colorado, 2004-2012. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2016 Dec; 128(6): 1233-1240.