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[Date]

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 65 (Skinner) – Momnibus - Support

Dear Senator Portantino:

On behalf of **[insert organization name]**, I'm writing in support of SB 65 (Skinner) which would re-imagine maternal health in order 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.

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 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, the ratio of death for Black women was 26.4 per 100,000, almost 3.8 times higher than that for white women. Meanwhile, California's infant mortality rate is 4.2 per 1000 live births, lower than the national average of 5.7. However, 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. 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 also 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 predicted by 2025. Currently California has nine counties that do not have a single OBGYN. California only has two nurse midwifery programs in the entire state, and only one direct entry midwifery program, approved by their respective state licensing boards. 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.

SB 65 will address these issues by:

1. Codifying and expanding the powers and protections for California's Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Committee including having the committee investigate maternal mortality and

morbidity; racial and socioeconomic disparities; Queer, Trans, and Gender Non-Conforming birthing outcomes; the impact of global warming on pregnancy outcomes; as well as make recommendations on best practices.

2. Updating data collection and protocols for counties participating in the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Process and requiring counties meeting a specified criteria to participate.
3. Requiring Medi-Cal to provide full-spectrum doula care to all pregnant and postpartum people on Medi-Cal who would like one.
4. Expanding Medi-Cal postpartum coverage from 60 days to one year.
5. Creating a CalWORKS pilot program to give a monthly stipend to low-income pregnant and postpartum people starting at 6 months of pregnancy and continuing through the postpartum period, lasting until the child is two years old.
6. Providing further support for pregnant individuals who are very low-income with additional CalWORKS program support, as well as removing some of the punitive rules that currently limit program participation.
7. Building the midwifery workforce by providing funding to primary care medical residency and other training programs that prioritize admitting underrepresented groups and those from underserved communities.

[Insert language here as to why SB 65 is important for your organization] For these reasons, we proudly support SB 65 and ask for your “AYE” vote.

Signature

Name

Title