

## House Resolution 1059

By: Representatives Schofield of the 63<sup>rd</sup>, Davis of the 87<sup>th</sup>, Cannon of the 58<sup>th</sup>, Glaize of the 67<sup>th</sup>, Lupton of the 83<sup>rd</sup>, and others

## A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing Black maternal health statistics; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the United States has the highest rates of maternal mortality among higher  
3 income countries. There are an estimated 700 to 900 deaths per year in the United States that  
4 are pregnancy related, and another 50,000 persons suffer from severe complications; and
- 5 WHEREAS, the CDC estimates that 80 percent of pregnancy related deaths in the United  
6 States are preventable; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the United States has an infant mortality rate that is higher than most higher  
8 income countries. Currently, the United States is ranked 33 out of 36 countries belonging to  
9 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with an average of  
10 5.58 deaths per 1,000 live births; and
- 11 WHEREAS, racism and racial bias in healthcare systems contribute to both the national  
12 maternal mortality and morbidity crisis and infant mortality and morbidity, in particular for  
13 pregnant and postpartum persons and infants who are Black; and

14 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare longstanding racial and socioeconomic  
15 inequities in our healthcare system; and

16 WHEREAS, one of the essential goals of the state Department of Public Health is to reduce  
17 health and mental health disparities among vulnerable and underserved communities to  
18 achieve health equity throughout Georgia. This essential goal should extend to health equity  
19 for Black birthing people and babies; and

20 WHEREAS, Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy related  
21 causes than non-Hispanic white women, and access to prenatal care, socioeconomic status,  
22 and general physical health do not fully explain the disparity seen in maternal mortality and  
23 morbidity rates among Black individuals, and there is a growing body of evidence that Black  
24 persons are often treated unfairly and unequally in the health care system; and

25 WHEREAS, Georgia has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the United States at  
26 almost twice the national rate; and

27 WHEREAS, in Georgia, Black women are almost three times more likely to die from  
28 pregnancy related causes than non-Hispanic white women; and

29 WHEREAS, Georgia has experienced a string of hospital labor and delivery closures across  
30 the state, especially in rural areas. In 2019, 93 of the 109 rural counties in Georgia lacked  
31 a hospital labor and delivery unit and 75 lacked an obstetrician-gynecologist(OB/GYN); and

32 WHEREAS, in Georgia, 34.6 percent of counties are defined as maternity care deserts  
33 compared to 32.6 percent in the United States; and

34 WHEREAS, chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity,  
35 and diabetes contribute to high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. In Georgia, Black  
36 women have egregious above-average rates of all of these conditions, resulting in high-risk  
37 pregnancies and poor maternal health outcomes; and

38 WHEREAS, there was a hearing where 25 Georgians testified representing these  
39 organizations: GBPI, North Georgia Labor Council, Emory physicians and PNHP, Reaching  
40 Our Sisters Everywhere, American College of Nurse-Midwives, PSI Georgia, GA OBGYN  
41 Society, Urban League of Greater Atlanta, F.A.I.R, Georgia National Organization for  
42 Women, 9 to 5, Mandala Midwifery, Commonsense Childbirth, New GA Project, Sistersong,  
43 Healing Sacred Scars Foundation, AMPLIFY GA Collaborative, and Morehouse School of  
44 Medicine; and

45 WHEREAS, as of January 29, 2024, 22 organizations have signed onto a statement titled  
46 "eradicate black maternal mortality in Georgia now."

47 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
48 the members of this body recognize Black maternal health statistics and urge that  
49 improvements be made to achieve health equity.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
51 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the  
52 public and the press.