

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION establishing the Infant Mortality Task Force.

2 WHEREAS, the United States has the highest infant mortality and maternal  
3 mortality rates out of any other high-income country and spends the most on health care;  
4 and

5 WHEREAS, in the first year of life, almost 20,000 infants died in the United States,  
6 including 321 in Kentucky in 2021; and

7 WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),  
8 the leading causes of infant mortality are birth defects, low birthweight and preterm birth,  
9 maternal pregnancy complications, sudden infant death syndrome, and unintentional  
10 injuries; and

11 WHEREAS, Kentucky's infant mortality rate was 6.15 deaths per 1,000 births in  
12 2021 and preliminary data from the CDC show a decline to 5.77 in 2022; and

13 WHEREAS, the preterm birth rate in Kentucky was 12 percent per 1,000 births in  
14 2021 and preliminary data from the CDC show a decline to 11.7 percent in 2022; and

15 WHEREAS, the infant mortality rate for black infants was 9.9 per 1,000 births  
16 compared to 5.3 for white infants and 6.1 for Hispanic infants in 2020; and

17 WHEREAS, Kentucky's rate of maternal mortality is 38.4 per 100,000 births  
18 compared to 23.5 for the United States in 2020; and

19 WHEREAS, Kentucky scores poorly on several measures for maternal vulnerability  
20 including socioeconomic determinants, reproductive health care, mental health issues,  
21 and substance abuse; and

22 WHEREAS, Kentucky has made several policy improvements including extended  
23 Medicaid coverage for new mothers and increased access to prenatal care; and

24 WHEREAS, possible policy options to continue improvements and address the  
25 racial gap in infant and maternal deaths may include expanding access to birthing centers  
26 and providing Medicaid reimbursement for doulas; and

27 WHEREAS, listening to women's maternity experiences in Kentucky and exploring

1 best practices in other states may provide additional policy recommendations;

2 NOW, THEREFORE,

3 *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the*  
4 *Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Senate concurring therein:*

5 ➔Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission shall establish the Infant  
6 Mortality Task Force to review factors influencing infant mortality and make  
7 recommendations to decrease the rate of infant mortality in the Commonwealth.

8 ➔Section 2. The duties of the Infant Mortality Task Force shall include but are  
9 not limited to:

10 (1) Reviewing research that examines the connections between a mother's health  
11 before, during, and between pregnancies, as well as that of her child across the course of  
12 the child's life;

13 (2) Reviewing comprehensive data on infant mortality deaths and pregnancy  
14 complications, including data disaggregated by race, geography, and socioeconomic  
15 status;

16 (3) Reviewing research and listening to women's maternity experiences to  
17 identify best practices and effective interventions for improving the quality and safety of  
18 maternity care and reducing infant mortality; and

19 (4) Making recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission, the  
20 Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and any other relevant executive branch agency,  
21 including but not limited to the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, the Public Protection  
22 Cabinet, the Cabinet for Economic Development, and the Education and Labor Cabinet,  
23 to improve health care and social, economic, and environmental conditions that may  
24 improve maternal health and decrease infant mortality.

25 ➔Section 3. The Infant Mortality Task Force shall be composed of the following  
26 members, with final membership of the task force being subject to the consideration and  
27 approval of the Legislative Research Commission:

1           (1) Four members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of  
2 the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated by the Speaker of the  
3 House of Representatives as a co-chair of the task force; and

4           (2) Four members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, one of  
5 whom shall be designated by the President of the Senate as a co-chair of the task force.

6           ➔Section 4. The Infant Mortality Task Force shall meet monthly during the 2024  
7 Interim of the General Assembly. The task force shall submit findings and  
8 recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate  
9 committee or committees by December 1, 2024.

10          ➔Section 5. Provisions of this Resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, the  
11 Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the  
12 issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof, and to  
13 designate a study completion date.