



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 151
Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, Vice Chairman Huffman and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 151. Senate Bill 151 designates the month of May as “Maternal Mortality Awareness Month” to raise awareness of the high maternal mortality rate in Ohio and around the country. It is also meant to inspire the Ohio Legislature and all Ohioans to take action to decrease our maternal mortality rates.

The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any country in the developed world, with around 20 deaths related to or aggravated by pregnancy per 100,000 births. From 2011 to 2015, over 4,000 maternal deaths occurred in the United States. At a time when maternal mortality rates have been decreasing globally, the United States has experienced a 26.6 percent increase from 2000 to 2014. The problem is particularly dire for African-American women, who have a maternal mortality rate of 47.2 deaths per 100,000 births. This is over double the rate for white women.

Among U.S. states, Ohio currently ranks 29th in maternal mortality with 20.3 deaths per 100,000 births. Between 2008 and 2014, there were 408 pregnancy related deaths in Ohio. Alarming, Ohio had a “severe maternal morbidity rate” of 143 per 10,000 deliveries in 2013. Severe Maternal Morbidity, or SMM, is defined as “a physical or psychological condition that either results from, or is aggravated by, pregnancy and has an adverse effect on a women’s health” and it is often viewed as a “near miss” on a maternal death. Clearly, this is a crisis in Ohio and nationwide, which is why it is important that we call attention to it by designating May as “Maternal Mortality Awareness Month” in Ohio.

I appreciate your attention to this important issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 151. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.