



THE CENTER FOR EST. 1913
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
RESEARCH • ANALYSIS • ACTION

HOUSE PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE
Written Proponent Testimony on HB 190
November 1st, 2023

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the House Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 190. The Center for Community Solutions is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that aims to improve health, social and economic conditions through research, policy analysis, and communication.

The Center for Community Solutions has existed since 1913, and since then, we have seen moments of transformation, achievement, and progress in our state and country. However, there have also been moments of struggle, grief and tragedy. Racism has defined much of our nation's history, but at different moments, our country has worked to grow, through things like voting access, civil rights, or more recently the targeted investment in communities that are disproportionately affected by public health issues. House Bill 190 will bring necessary awareness to one of the public health issues by designating April 11 to April 17 as Black Maternal Health Week. Designated weeks provide an opportunity to educate people on topics that are new to them and encourage them to participate in addressing the problem.

Across the country, women are dying from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth at an increasingly higher rate than our peers. The United States maternal mortality ratio is 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births. The next highest countries, France and Canada, have rates of 7.6 and 7.5, respectively. In the United States, maternal mortality rates are inconsistent across different demographics. The non-Hispanic White maternal mortality rate is 19.1, the Hispanic rate is 18.2 and the non-Hispanic Black rate is 55.3. Maternal health outcomes are not equitable across different communities.

Community Solutions does extensive work on a statewide level analyzing policy issues on maternal health, and we recognize through our research that there are extremely salient disparities that Black women experience in the state of Ohio. Across the state, Black women struggle with receiving access to care, and thus, suffer from complications that are preventable. The ongoing pattern in this disparity reflects an issue rampant nationwide and evident of a larger problem entrenched within this nation's history. We therefore analyze issues regarding maternal health through a lens of racial equity because understanding issues related to

maternal health means to understand underlying systemic factors that disproportionately impact Black women. Here are a few findings from our most recent research:

- In Ohio, Black babies die before their 1st birthday at over twice the rate of deaths of white babies.
- Black Women are 2.5x more likely to die of a pregnancy related causes compared to white women.
- Ohio's maternal mortality rates more than doubled between 2008 and 2018, and 61% of those deaths were preventable.
- Nationally, Ohio's maternal mortality ranking is 28th in the nation.
- 13 counties in Ohio qualify as maternity deserts, which contain no obstetric care.

These findings support the importance of recognizing the health and wellbeing of Black women, because these disparities can only change through persistent and constant work to recognize the wellbeing of Black women as American citizens and Ohioans that deserve access to quality life and care. Through the creation of Black Maternal Health Week, Ohio can raise awareness to maternal health issues that impact Black women, and the subsequent harm it has on their communities and family.

We want to thank you again for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 190 and applaud the sponsors for working to bring attention to this important topic. We would welcome the chance to share additional research that the Center for Community Solutions has conducted in this space.

Contact Information

Kyle Thompson

Policy Assistant

614-745-0740 ext.304

Kthompson@communitysolutions.com

Dylan Armstrong

Public Policy Fellow

614-745-0740 ext. 302

Darmstrong@communitysolutions.com

For further information on data referenced in this testimony, please see the links below:

American Health Rankings: Report on Health of Women and Children

<https://www.americashealthrankings.org/learn/reports/2023-health-of-women-and-children-report>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Maternal Mortality Rates in the United States, 2021.

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-2021.htm#anchor_1559670130302

State of Health and Human Service Policy 2022
[State of HHS Policy October 2022 \(communitysolutions.com\)](https://communitysolutions.com)

2023 Community Solutions' Statewide Fact Sheet
[Ohio-Fact-Sheet.pdf \(communitysolutions.com\)](https://communitysolutions.com)