



Good Afternoon,

My name is Dàna M. Langford. I am a certified nurse midwife and have the pleasure of serving as CEO and medical director of an organization I was blessed to co-found, Village of Healing and The Village of Healing Center.

I am writing this testimony in full support of HB 190 which would designate the week of April 11<sup>th</sup> through April 17<sup>th</sup> as Black Maternal Health Week.

Black Maternal Health week, according to the CDC, is a week designated to bring attention and action in improving Black maternal health. Black Mamas Matter Alliance created this week to build awareness, activism, and community-building.

The data has repeatedly shown us we are in a crisis in maternal health. Women are more likely to die now than in the 1960's. This means that with all the advancements in medicine including education and technology, women are still more likely to die, despite the forementioned. This rings ever so true for Black women. Nationally, Black women are 3-4x more likely to die due to pregnancy related complications than white women, with more than 80% of these deaths being preventable. We saw this disparity increase more during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the state of Ohio, this disparity remains a fact facing Black women that continues to grow and plague the healthcare system. We have seen the maternal mortality rate swell from 29.3 deaths per 100,000 to 59.7.

As a reproductive age Black woman, working with reproductive age Black women, I experience the terror of decision making when deciding to start a family personally and with my patients. Black women are making life or death decisions when choosing pregnancy.

It is time we act. We must show all the citizens of this great state that their lives are of importance, and we are doing everything in our power to ensure safety and health, this includes in healthcare.

In conclusion, I am in full support of HB 190, and look forward to the activism and community-building this week will encourage your constituents to change the course of healthcare for Black women.

Thank you for your time and consideration.