

Legislative
Assembly
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Bill 209

An Act to proclaim the month of April as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month

Co-sponsors:
MPP A. Hazell
Mrs. L. Collard

Private Members' Bill

1st Reading June 5, 2024
2nd Reading
3rd Reading
Royal Assent



**An Act to proclaim the month of April as
Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month**

Preamble

Black mothers face worse maternal health outcomes than mothers in other groups. Black women are approximately three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women. This is not only a policy failure, but a moral failure.

Ongoing structural racism plays a central role in the deaths of Black mothers; biases within the medical profession directly shape the care that Black women receive during pregnancy. The quality of maternal healthcare is even worse for Black women who face poverty, unstable housing, food insecurity and violence in their everyday lives.

Applying a racial justice perspective is essential for contextualizing and resolving racial disparities in maternal health in Ontario. Structural racism can manifest itself through barriers to accessing health care and medical knowledge, through the exclusion of minority communities from health data and through inaccurate diagnoses and treatment.

Proclaiming April as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month raises awareness of the challenges faced by Black women in accessing adequate maternal health care. These challenges include the lack of data collection on health risks, instances of medical racism and the absence of tailored support for Black women. By acknowledging these unique challenges, the wellbeing of Black mothers becomes a focus of our healthcare system, taking the first step in ensuring we move towards better protecting Black mothers in Ontario.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month

1 The month of April in each year is proclaimed as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month.

Commencement

2 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month Act, 2024*.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill proclaims the month of April in each year as Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice Month.