

February 28, 2024
The Honourable Buffy Wicks
California State Assembly

California State Assembly District Office
1515 Clay Street, Suite 2201
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 583: Birthing Justice for California Families Pilot Project.

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

I am a current Master's Candidate in the Fielding School of Public Health concentrating my studies in Population and Reproductive Health. I am writing to express my support for Assembly Bill 583 which will address the racial disparities in maternal health outcomes we see today.

AB 583 rightfully recognizes that full-spectrum doula care both supports the fundamental tenets of reproductive justice and serves as an effective preventive health intervention to decrease instances of maternal morbidity and mortality. Doula care is associated with improved birth outcomes for both the birthing person and their baby, including lower cesarean rates, lower rates of preterm births, fewer obstetric interventions and complications, and greater experiences overall.¹ By providing community doula care at no cost to qualifying families, AB 583 could radically improve birth outcomes for low-income California constituents.

In California, Black birthing people are 4-6 times more likely to die than their counterparts, and with the overturning of Roe vs. Wade, the maternal mortality rate is projected to increase by 33% for Black birthing people.¹ Implementing accessible and culturally sensitive perinatal care through doula programs could prevent many of these deaths and reduce associated medical costs.

I want to stress my appreciation for the inclusion of doula training programs in AB 583. Providing free training to aspiring birth workers reduces cost barriers associated with doula certification and can result in more families receiving support.

While AB 583 is currently inactive, I respectfully encourage you to reintroduce the bill and continue your dedication to the reproductive rights of all birthing people in California.

Sincerely,
Natalie Pulvino
MPH Candidate, UCLA
nataliepulvino@g.ucla.edu

References

1. Bill Status - AB-583 Birthing Justice for California Families Pilot Project.
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB583.
Accessed 28 Feb. 2024.