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PARLIAMENTARIAN
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Ways and Means Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 5, 2020

House Bill 286 Public Health – Maternal Mortality Review Program – Stakeholders

Colleagues,

I am pleased to present House Bill 286 Public Health – Maternal Mortality Review Program – Stakeholders, which requires that stakeholders convened under the Maternal Mortality Review Program reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of women most impacted by maternal deaths in the state.

In 2000, Maryland took a stand for women and mothers by establishing the Maternal Mortality Review Committee, made up of volunteer health care and public health professionals, to examine maternal deaths in the state and to report annually on their findings and recommendations. In 2018, this committee voted to pass my legislation creating a group of specified stakeholders who convene at least twice a year to review the annual report.

Maryland's maternal mortality rate for Black women is 3.7 times higher than that of their white counterparts, and the racial differences in the deaths have increased over the years. The stakeholder group created as a result of my legislation is tasked specifically with identifying recommendations with a focus on addressing the persistent racial disparities in maternal deaths in the state. To review the annual report through an equity lens, it's critical that the women most impacted by maternal deaths have a seat at the table when discussing recommendations. HB 286 ensures the Maternal Mortality Stakeholder Group reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of women most impacted by maternal deaths in the state. It's critical that Maryland continue to address the high rate of maternal mortality, and particularly that of women of color.

I urge the committee to give a **favorable** report for HB 286.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jheanelle Wilkins".

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins