



NIH IMPROVE Act

Rep. Lauren Underwood

Sen. Laphonza Butler

BACKGROUND

According to The Commonwealth Fund, the US has the highest maternal mortality rate of any high-income nation; a rate which is disproportionately high for Black women in the US. It is estimated that up to 80% of these deaths are ultimately preventable.¹ In 2019, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) launched the Implementing a Maternal Health and Pregnancy Outcomes Vision for Everyone (IMPROVE) Initiative. The IMPROVE Initiative supported research to reduce preventable causes of maternal deaths and improve health care for women before, during, and after pregnancy.²

This critical research program lacks a sustained funding source, threatening research outcomes and conclusions. The bipartisan **NIH IMPROVE Act** would provide 7 years of consistent funding to carry out the IMPROVE initiative and support research to identify the causes of maternal mortality and work to reduce said causes.³

BILL SUMMARY

The **NIH IMPROVE Act** seeks to:

- Authorize \$53.4M annually for seven years to carry out the IMPROVE Initiative and support research on potential causes of maternal mortality and severe morbidity.
- Approve research that would target disparities associated with maternal mortality and severe morbidity and aim to reduce preventable causes of maternal deaths.
- Additionally, the bill would also build an evidence base for improved care and outcomes in underserved maternal care deserts.

Additionally, the bill proposes an integrated and comprehensive approach to investigate the biological, behavioral, sociocultural, and structural factors influencing maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity. It aims to establish an evidence-based framework for enhanced care and outcomes in specific U.S. regions.

COSPONSERS AND ENDORSEMENTS

The NIH IMPROVE Act is endorsed by over 100 organizations, including the National Birth Equity Collaborative, PremieWorld, Mental Health America, Black Mamas Matter Alliance, March of Dimes, American Federation of Teachers, Center for Law and Social Policy, Planned Parenthood, Center for Reproductive Rights, and Families USA.

Find a list of cosponsors [here](#).

¹ The Commonwealth Fund: [Insights into the U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis: An International Comparison](#)

² NIH Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development: [Implementing a Maternal Health and Pregnancy Outcomes Vision for Everyone \(IMPROVE\) Initiative](#)

³ United States House of Representatives Black Maternal Health Caucus: [Butler, Britt, Underwood, and Fitzpatrick Introduce Bipartisan NIH Improve Act to Codify Funding for Maternal Care & Mortality Research](#)