

Midwives for Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services (MOMS) Act

Senators Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

The Midwives for MOMS Act aims to address the maternal and infant mortality crisis by increasing the number of trained midwives in the United States. This bill establishes two new funding streams for midwifery education—the Title VII Health Professions Training Programs, and the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs. Additionally, the bill increases diversity in the maternity care workforce by prioritizing students from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds.

Beginning in 1987, data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) documented an increase in pregnancy-related deaths in the United States. America continues to rank far behind almost all other developed countries in birth outcomes for both mothers and babies, including unacceptably high rates of maternal and infant mortality, preterm births, and severe complications of pregnancy that have adverse effects on women's health. Communities of color disproportionately experience these tragedies surrounding birth.

Decades of research have shown that midwifery is associated with high-quality care and outcomes. Recipients of care by midwives report high levels of patient satisfaction, and midwifery care can lower health care costs. Despite these positive outcomes, midwives currently only attend an estimated 9 percent of all births in the United States. Fifty-six percent of all counties in the United States do not have a single practicing nurse-midwife or certified midwife.

Midwives for MOMS Act

The Midwives for MOMS Act seeks to address this crisis in our maternity care system by establishing two new funding streams for midwifery education—the Title VII Health Professions Training Programs authorized at \$20 million, and the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs authorized at \$15 million.

Midwifery is, by nature, an apprentice training program. As a result of inadequate funding for midwifery training programs and difficulty in finding preceptors to train midwife students, there has not been growth in midwifery training programs. The funding authorized in this bill is split into three streams in order to address the largest challenges facing the recruitment and training of midwife students: expanding the capacity of midwifery programs, compensating midwife preceptors (who are currently not compensated financially for training midwife students), and to helping midwife students pay for the education they need to practice.

Additionally, to increase diversity in the maternity care workforce, the Midwives for MOMS Act requires that midwifery programs prioritize funding for programs that demonstrate a focus on increasing racial and ethnic minority representation in midwifery education and that target students who plan to practice in health professional shortage areas.

Supporting Organizations

The Midwives for MOMS Act is supported by the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM), the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM), and the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC).

Please contact Calli Shapiro at Calli_Shapiro@lujan.senate.gov for questions or to cosponsor.

