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Vice Chairwoman Roybal-Allard Introduces Resolution to Recognize the Celebration of National Midwifery Week

Washington, D.C. – Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-40), Vice Chair of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, co-led the introduction of [H. Res. 1419](#), a resolution to recognize this week, October 2nd through 8th, as National Midwifery Week 2022. She is joined in this effort by maternity care champions: Congresswomen Jaime Herrera Beutler (W-03), Katherine Clark (MA-05) and Ashley Hinson (IA-01).

The U.S. spends significantly more per capita on childbirth than any other industrialized nation. Despite this investment, America continues to rank far behind most 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 and rural areas disproportionately experience these tragedies at birth.

The statistics become more dire when you consider that the United States is facing a growing shortage of trained maternity care providers to care for the approximately 4 million women who give birth each year. The March of Dimes reports that more than 2.2 million women of childbearing age live in one of the 1,095 US counties that classify as a maternity care desert, with no hospital offering obstetric care, no birth center, and no obstetric provider. Nearly half the counties in the United States do not have a single ob-gyn and 55 percent are without a certified nurse-midwife or certified midwife. According to the most recent HRSA workforce analysis, the supply of OBGYN physicians in nonmetro areas will only be able to meet 51%.6 of the demand by 2030. This means that the numbers of babies born to women who do not receive adequate prenatal care will continue to grow, putting them at increased risk for premature birth, stillbirth and early neonatal death.

“Midwives provide high-quality, evidence-based, cost-effective care and are widely cited as being an important part of the solution to addressing the problems in our maternity care system,” said **Congresswoman Roybal-Allard, co-chair of the Bipartisan Maternity Care Caucus.** “I am delighted to lead this effort to recognize the contributions of America’s certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives during National Midwifery Week. We can and must do better for moms and babies in this country and increasing access to midwifery care is one critical step to achieving better outcomes.”

“Midwives play a crucial role in allowing moms across America to access high-quality maternity care. As co-founder of the bipartisan Maternity Care Caucus, I’ve worked with my colleagues to improve health outcomes for moms across our country through increased access to midwifery services. And today, I’m proud to continue that effort by introducing a resolution recognizing National Midwifery Week and the amazing work midwives do to support families in the United States,” **Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler said.**

“As maternal and infant mortality rates continue to rise in the U.S., we need to be innovative about tackling this crisis,” **said Assistant Speaker Clark.** “Midwives are a critical component of our maternal care network, often providing care to women with the fewest health care options. We recognize National Midwifery Week to honor their critical work and as a call to action: We need to do more for our moms, for babies, and for the people who support their health and safety.”

“Improving access to maternal care is a top priority for me in Congress, especially for those who live in rural communities,” **said Congresswoman Ashley Hinson.** “Many women in rural areas often have to drive over an hour to get to an OBGYN. Midwives can help fill this gap in maternal care. Recognizing National Midwifery Week will help expand access to midwifery services and ensure that expecting moms and their babies can have safe, healthy pregnancies.”

“The evidence supporting midwives and midwifery-led care is vast and centering the voices and value of advanced practice midwives in public health and policy discussions is integral to improving our country’s alarming maternal mortality and morbidity outcomes,” **stated American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) Chief Executive Officer Katrina Holland.** “Better integration of midwives onto care teams and within health systems leads to improved care, reduced cost, and patient satisfaction. It is time for midwives across the country to be recognized for the outstanding standard of care they provide birthing people throughout the lifespan. ACNM stands in strong support of our members and all the midwives and birth workers who work tirelessly to improve the standard of maternal and women’s health care in this country. We are grateful to have champions like Representatives Lucille Roybal Allard (D-CA), Jamie Herrera-Beutler (R-WA), Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Ashley Hinson (R-IA) in the United States Congress who understand that maternity care systems are improved when there is greater access to midwives and midwifery-led care models. We applaud their efforts in recognizing that midwives are part of the solution to the maternal health crises and we celebrate the midwifery profession during ACNM’s National Midwifery Week.”

In 2021, Congresswoman Roybal-Allard, along with Congresswomen Herrera Beutler, Clark and Hinson, introduced [H.R. 3352, the Midwives for MOMS Act](#), to address the growing maternity care provider shortage and to improve maternity care outcomes by expanding educational opportunities for Midwives. In 2015, Congresswomen Roybal-Allard and Herrera Beutler co-founded the bipartisan Maternity Care Caucus to raise awareness about the status of childbirth in the United States and the challenges facing America’s maternity care system.

The text of the resolution can be found [here](#).

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