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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING JANUARY 23, 2026, TO BE "MATERNAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY"  
IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Carson, Kazarian, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale,  
Messier, Furtado, Diaz, Donovan, Caldwell, and Cortvriend  
Date Introduced: January 22, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, January 23<sup>rd</sup> is recognized as Maternal Health Awareness Day, and was  
2 established to educate citizens about the critical importance of maternal health and promising  
3 maternal health initiatives. This year’s theme is "Holding Ground on Maternal Health"; and  
4 WHEREAS, Maternal health refers to women’s health and well-being during pregnancy,  
5 childbirth, and postpartum (after childbirth) is integral to the health of our State, communities,  
6 and families; and  
7 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more  
8 than 80 percent of maternal deaths in the United States are preventable, and severe maternal  
9 morbidity regarding pregnancy-related complications lead to major short or long-term health  
10 consequences; and  
11 WHEREAS, The rate of severe maternal morbidity among Rhode Island women  
12 delivering in hospitals is lower than the national rate; however, the United States has the highest  
13 rate among all wealthy nations; and  
14 WHEREAS, Black women have the highest maternal mortality rate of any racial or  
15 ethnic group and although that number has decreased in recent years, there still exists a growing  
16 concern due in great measure to health care becoming unobtainable for these mothers and others  
17 in both rural and urban areas due to ongoing financial, staffing, and policy changes which have  
18 caused an "Access in Crisis" across the country; and  
19 WHEREAS, All pregnant individuals should have access to comprehensive and timely

1 prenatal services across the healthcare continuum, and reducing prenatal health inequities through  
2 policy and systems change can help improve opportunities for every Rhode Islander; and

3 WHEREAS, To combat the maternal mortality rate, the State of Rhode Island has  
4 engaged in ongoing efforts to systematically collect and comprehensively review maternal deaths  
5 through the Pregnancy & Post-Partum Death Review Committee; and

6 WHEREAS, In 2023, one third of Rhode Island's births were delivered by cesarean  
7 delivery which is now the most common surgery performed in the United States, and which is  
8 often preventable; and

9 WHEREAS, At least five percent of the babies born in Rhode Island are prenatally  
10 exposed to substances like alcohol, cannabis, nicotine, stimulants, and opioids; and

11 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island is collaborating with community organizations,  
12 hospital and health systems and clinical collaborations including the Perinatal Neonatal Quality  
13 Collaborative (PNQC) of Rhode Island, the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) of  
14 Rhode Island, and the Rhode Island Prematurity Task Force to reduce maternal mortality and  
15 severe morbidity through collaboration and implementation of evidence-based initiatives; and

16 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island is committed to protecting the health and well-  
17 being of pregnant people by continuing public awareness and understanding of health risks and  
18 factors that contribute to maternal death, to improving public and professional awareness of the  
19 issues related to maternal health and mortality, and promoting the various efforts to reduce  
20 maternal mortality, morbidity, and disparities; now, therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
22 proclaims January 23, 2026, to be "Maternal Health Awareness Day" in the State of Rhode  
23 Island; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
25 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Dr. Dina Himelfarb, President, Rhode Island  
26 Medical Society.

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