



KENNETH I. GORDON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
21st MIDDLESEX DISTRICT

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

Vice Chair
Joint Committee on Economic Development
and Emerging Technologies

Committees:
Municipalities and Regional Government
Personnel and Administration

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 146
TEL: (617) 722-2575
FAX: (617) 722-2238
Kenneth.Gordon@MAhouse.gov

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Media contact:

Cody Case

Cody.Case@mahouse.gov

(617) 722-2575

Rep. Gordon Supports Bill to Address Racial Inequities in Maternal Health
Commission Will Target Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

BOSTON - Representative Ken Gordon (D-Bedford) joined his colleagues in the House yesterday to pass a bill aimed at eliminating racial inequities in maternal health.

The bill will create a special legislative commission to make recommendations that reduce or remove the kind of racial inequities that result in women of color dying of pregnancy-related causes at more than double the rate of white women. The commission will gather information and raise awareness of this systemic societal problem, in addition to reporting on barriers to equitable maternal care and best practices for remedying inequities.

“In order to truly address racism in our community, we must get to the bottom of why barriers exist and then correct them” said Gordon. “This bill is a critical step toward ensuring that all mothers in Massachusetts can access the care they need, regardless of race. Nothing can be more important than that. I’m grateful to my colleagues Kay Khan, Liz Miranda, and Speaker DeLeo for their leadership on this”.

The 25-member commission will investigate and report on:

- Best-practices by other states or grass-roots organizations to reduce or eliminate racial inequities in maternal health or severe maternal morbidity, including, among other approaches, culturally competent and affordable doula services;
- Accessibility and affordability of birthing centers, maternal medical homes, and doula care and the diversity and cultural competency of maternal health care providers;
- Barriers to accessing prenatal and postpartum care;

- How historical and current structural, institutional and individual forms of racism affect maternal mortality as well as potential solutions, such as bias training in hospital facilities and birthing centers;
- Available data relating to maternal mortality and morbidity.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

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