

State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Designates Week in March as Doula Appreciation Week

03/28/2019

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed a joint resolution (SJR120) designating March 22 to March 28 of each year as “Doula Appreciation Week” in New Jersey.

Doulas support healthy pregnancies by providing culturally appropriate, social and emotional support to pregnant women throughout the prenatal period, labor and delivery, as well as the postpartum period. Research demonstrates that support from a doula is associated with lower caesarian section rates, fewer obstetric interventions, fewer complications, and the improved health of mothers and babies after delivery.

“Improving health outcomes for our mothers and infants is critical in building a stronger, fairer, and healthier New Jersey,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I am proud to sign this resolution into law today to bring awareness to the important role doulas can play in ensuring healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.”

“I am thrilled that New Jersey is recognizing the critical role that doulas have in establishing a safe and healthy pregnancy for all women,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “A doula is a mother’s advocate both in and out of the doctor’s office and can amplify a mother’s voice to ensure she is receiving the best possible care. Community doulas in particular are able to provide culturally responsive care to their mothers, which has been shown to help reduce the racial disparity in maternal health outcomes.”

Primary sponsors of the resolution include Senators Ronald Rice and Tom Kean, Jr., and Assemblymembers Angela McKnight, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and Shanique Speight.

“Doula’s advocate extensively on behalf of pregnant women. In maternity health care, they do thankless jobs and go unrecognized for their work,” **said Senator Ronald Rice**. “I believe we should dedicate Doula Appreciation Week during the month of March, Women’s History Month, for the services they provide for women.”

“Doulas play a vital role in saving the lives of mothers and babies in New Jersey and across the nation,” **said Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Jr.** “Studies show that working with a doula can prevent many labor complications, resulting in healthier and happier outcomes for both mother and child. This resolution will raise awareness and highlight the importance of doulas, helping to ensure all New Jersey women receive the quality maternal care they deserve.”

“As a state, we must emphasize the importance of pre and postnatal care, particularly in communities of color,” **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight**. “Research has shown that support from a doula produces more positive outcomes for both mother and baby. Doula appreciation week highlights the importance of doula care and raises awareness for their vital services.”

“With the highest maternal and child death rate in the nation, New Jersey must do everything to encourage healthy pregnancies and healthy families,” **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. “Doula Appreciation week is a great way to honor the invaluable support doulas provide to expecting mothers and their babies and to bring awareness to the work that they do.”

“Doula professionals are caregivers for an expecting mom, providing the right support at the time she truly needs it,” **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. “Doulas deserve to be recognized and celebrated for their services just as we celebrate our nurses and teachers. The support and service they provide to families during pregnancy and childbirth saves lives and helps to ensure healthy women and families.”

“Many women are finding comfort in the support of a doula during their pregnancies,” **said Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin**. “A doula provides emotional, physical, and educational support to a mother who is expecting, is experiencing labor, or has recently given birth. Their care has often been said to help reduce pregnancy

complications. It is critically important we acknowledge their work and continue to bring an awareness to their services."

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