

**26:2H-12.6i**  
**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST**

Compiled by the NJ State Law Library

**LAWS OF:** 2023                    **CHAPTER:** 286

**NJSA:** 26:2H-12.6i Requires certain health care facilities to develop certain doula policies and procedures.

**BILL NO:** S4119                    (Substituted for A5739 (1R))

**SPONSOR(S)** Ruiz, M. Teresa and others

**DATE INTRODUCED:** 11/30/2023

**COMMITTEE:**                    **ASSEMBLY:** --

**SENATE:** Health, Human Services & Sr. Citizens

**AMENDED DURING PASSAGE:** Yes

**DATE OF PASSAGE:**    **ASSEMBLY:** 01/08/2024

**SENATE:** 01/08/2024

**DATE OF APPROVAL:** 1/16/2024

**FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:**

**FINAL TEXT OF BILL** (S4119 ScaAa (2R) enacted)                    Yes

**S4119**

**INTRODUCED BILL:** (Includes sponsor(s) statement)                    Yes

**COMMITTEE STATEMENT:**    **ASSEMBLY:**                    No

**SENATE:**                    Yes

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at [www.njleg.state.nj.us](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us))

**FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:**                    Yes

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:**                    No

**A5739 (1R)**

**INTRODUCED BILL:** (Includes sponsor(s) statement)                    Yes

**COMMITTEE STATEMENT:**    **ASSEMBLY:**                    Yes

**SENATE:**                    No

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at [www.njleg.state.nj.us](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us))

**FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:**                    No

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:**                    No

**VETO MESSAGE:** No

**GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:** Yes

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext.103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

**REPORTS:** No

**HEARINGS:** No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:** No

CL/MM

P.L. 2023, CHAPTER 286, *approved January 16, 2024*  
Senate, No. 4119 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning doulas and supplementing Title 26 of the  
2 Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. As used in this section:

8 <sup>1</sup>**["Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Health.]**<sup>1</sup>

9 <sup>2</sup>"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Health.<sup>2</sup>

10 "Birthing center" means a birthing center licensed pursuant to  
11 P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

12 <sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Health.**<sup>1</sup><sup>2</sup>

13 "Doula" means a trained professional who provides continuous  
14 physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before,  
15 during, and after labor and childbirth, to help her to achieve the  
16 healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

17 "Hospital" means <sup>1</sup>**[a]** every general or special<sup>1</sup> hospital  
18 licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) that  
19 provides maternity services.

20 <sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>"Reproductive health service provider" means a hospital, clinic,**  
21 physician's office, or other facility that provides reproductive health  
22 services, including an employee, a volunteer, or a contractor of the  
23 provider.

24 "Reproductive health services" means medical, surgical,  
25 counseling, or referral services relating to the human reproductive  
26 system, including services relating to pregnancy or the termination  
27 of a pregnancy.

28 "WIC" means the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for  
29 Women, Infants and Children, established pursuant to the federal  
30 "Child Nutrition Act of 1966," Pub.L.89-642 (42 U.S.C. s.1771 et  
31 seq.).<sup>1</sup><sup>2</sup>

32 b. Each hospital and birthing center shall, commencing no later  
33 than the 180th day after the effective date of this act, adopt and  
34 maintain written policies and procedures authorizing a patient to  
35 select a doula of the patient's choice to accompany the patient  
36 within the facility's premises for the purposes of providing support  
37 before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SHH committee amendments adopted January 4, 2024.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly floor amendments adopted January 8, 2024.

1 c. Each hospital and birthing center shall provide a written copy  
2 of the policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b. of  
3 this section to:

4 (1) each health care provider providing maternity services at the  
5 facility;

6 (2) each patient receiving maternity services at the facility;  
7 <sup>2</sup>["<sup>1</sup>and"]<sup>1</sup> and<sup>2</sup>

8 (3) any other person, at the request of the patient <sup>2</sup>["<sup>1</sup>];

9 (4) nearby reproductive health service providers, including, but  
10 not limited to, Planned Parenthood health clinics; and

11 (5) nearby local WIC agencies and clinic offices<sup>1</sup>]<sup>2</sup>.

12 d. Each hospital and birthing center shall post a <sup>1</sup>["notice]  
13 summary<sup>1</sup> of the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant  
14 to subsection b. of this section <sup>1</sup>["in a conspicuous place:

15 (1) in the room of any patient admitted to the facility for  
16 maternity services; and

17 (2) <sup>1</sup>["] on the facility's Internet website <sup>2</sup>["<sup>1</sup>]. The hospital or  
18 birthing center shall make the summary available in the 10  
19 languages most commonly spoken in New Jersey, and, at the  
20 discretion of the commissioner, in such additional languages as the  
21 commissioner deems appropriate<sup>1</sup>]<sup>2</sup>.

22 e. Each hospital and birthing center shall designate a staff  
23 member to serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and  
24 doula organizations in order to provide information concerning the  
25 facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b.  
26 of this section.

27

28 2. The Commissioner of Health may adopt rules and regulations  
29 in accordance with the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L. 1968,  
30 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) as the commissioner deems necessary to  
31 effectuate the purposes of this act.

32

33 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

34

35

36

37

38 \_\_\_\_\_  
39 Requires certain health care facilities to develop certain doula  
policies and procedures.

# SENATE, No. 4119

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 30, 2023

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Senator NELLIE POU**

**District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Burgess**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires certain health care facilities to develop certain doula policies and procedures.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/18/2023)**

1 AN ACT concerning doulas and supplementing Title 26 of the  
2 Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. As used in this section:

8 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Health.

9 “Birthing center” means a birthing center licensed pursuant to  
10 P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

11 “Doula” means a trained professional who provides continuous  
12 physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before,  
13 during, and after labor and childbirth, to help her to achieve the  
14 healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

15 “Hospital” means a hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136  
16 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) that provides maternity services.

17 b. Each hospital and birthing center shall, commencing no later  
18 than the 180th day after the effective date of this act, adopt and  
19 maintain written policies and procedures authorizing a patient to  
20 select a doula of the patient’s choice to accompany the patient within  
21 the facility’s premises for the purposes of providing support before,  
22 during, and after labor and childbirth.

23 c. Each hospital and birthing center shall provide a written copy  
24 of the policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b. of  
25 this section to:

26 (1) each health care provider providing maternity services at the  
27 facility;

28 (2) each patient receiving maternity services at the facility; and

29 (3) any other person, at the request of the patient.

30 d. Each hospital and birthing center shall post a notice of the  
31 facility’s policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b.  
32 of this section in a conspicuous place:

33 (1) in the room of any patient admitted to the facility for maternity  
34 services; and

35 (2) on the facility’s Internet website.

36 e. Each hospital and birthing center shall designate a staff member  
37 to serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and doula  
38 organizations in order to provide information concerning the  
39 facility’s policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b.  
40 of this section.

41

42 2. The Commissioner of Health may adopt rules and regulations  
43 in accordance with the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L. 1968,  
44 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) as the commissioner deems necessary to  
45 effectuate the purposes of this act.

46

47 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

This bill requires hospitals that provide maternity services and birthing centers licensed in this State to adopt and maintain written policies and procedures authorizing a patient to select a doula of the patient's choice to accompany the patient within the facility's premises for the purposes of providing support before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

Under the provisions of the bill, each hospital and birthing center will be required to provide a written copy of those policies and procedures to: each health care provider providing maternity services at the facility; each patient receiving maternity services at the facility; and any other person, at the request of the patient.

Each hospital and birthing center will be required to post a notice of the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill in a conspicuous place in the room of any patient admitted to the facility for maternal services and on the facility's Internet website.

Each hospital and birthing center will designate a staff member to serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and doula organizations in order to provide information concerning the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill.

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR  
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
**SENATE, No. 4119**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JANUARY 4, 2024

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 4119.

As amended, this bill requires hospitals that provide maternity services and birthing centers licensed in this State to adopt and maintain written policies and procedures authorizing a patient to select a doula of the patient's choice to accompany the patient within the facility's premises for the purposes of providing support before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

Under the provisions of the bill, each hospital and birthing center will be required to provide a written copy of those policies and procedures to: each health care provider providing maternity services at the facility; each patient receiving maternity services at the facility; any other person, at the request of the patient; nearby reproductive health service providers, including, but not limited to, Planned Parenthood health clinics; and nearby local WIC agencies and clinic offices.

Each hospital and birthing center will be required to post a summary of the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill on the facility's Internet website. The hospital or birthing center will make the summary available in the 10 languages most commonly spoken in New Jersey, and, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Health, in such additional languages as the commissioner deems appropriate

Each hospital and birthing center will designate a staff member to serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and doula organizations in order to provide information concerning the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the definition of "hospital" to mean every general or special hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) that provides maternity services.

The committee amendments require each hospital and birthing center to provide a written copy of the policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill to nearby reproductive health service providers, including, but not limited to, Planned Parenthood health clinics, and nearby local WIC agencies and clinic offices.

The committee amendments provide that each hospital and birthing center will post a summary of the policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill on the facility's Internet website. As introduced, the bill required each hospital and birthing center to post a notice of the policies and procedures in the room of certain patients and on the facility's Internet website.

The committee amendments require each hospital and birthing center to make the summary of the policies and procedures available on the facility's Internet website in the 10 languages most commonly spoken in New Jersey, and, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Health, in such additional languages as the commissioner deems appropriate.

STATEMENT TO  
[First Reprint]  
**SENATE, No. 4119**

with Assembly Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Assemblywoman SPEIGHT)

ADOPTED: JANUARY 8, 2024

These floor amendments:

- 1) make a technical change involving the order of the definitions;
- 2) remove the definitions of "reproductive health service provider," "reproductive health services," and "WIC";
- 3) remove the requirement that hospitals and birthing centers provide a written copy of the policies and procedures to nearby reproductive health service providers, including, but not limited to, Planned Parenthood health clinics, and nearby local WIC agencies and clinic offices; and
- 4) remove the requirement that hospitals and birthing centers make the summary of the policies and procedures available on the facility's Internet website in the 10 languages most commonly spoken in New Jersey, and, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Health, in such additional languages as the commissioner deems appropriate.

# ASSEMBLY, No. 5739

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 30, 2023

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Assemblywoman SHAVONDA E. SUMTER**

**District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO**

**District 20 (Union)**

**Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires certain health care facilities to develop certain doula policies and procedures.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/7/2023)

1 AN ACT concerning doulas and supplementing Title 26 of the  
2 Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. As used in this section:

8 “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Health.

9 “Birthing center” means a birthing center licensed pursuant to  
10 P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.).

11 “Doula” means a trained professional who provides continuous  
12 physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before,  
13 during, and after labor and childbirth, to help her to achieve the  
14 healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

15 “Hospital” means a hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136  
16 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.) that provides maternity services.

17 b. Each hospital and birthing center shall, commencing no later  
18 than the 180th day after the effective date of this act, adopt and  
19 maintain written policies and procedures authorizing a patient to  
20 select a doula of the patient’s choice to accompany the patient within  
21 the facility’s premises for the purposes of providing support before,  
22 during, and after labor and childbirth.

23 c. Each hospital and birthing center shall provide a written copy  
24 of the policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b. of  
25 this section to:

26 (1) each health care provider providing maternity services at the  
27 facility;

28 (2) each patient receiving maternity services at the facility; and

29 (3) any other person, at the request of the patient.

30 d. Each hospital and birthing center shall post a notice of the  
31 facility’s policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b.  
32 of this section in a conspicuous place:

33 (1) in the room of any patient admitted to the facility for maternity  
34 services; and

35 (2) on the facility’s Internet website.

36 e. Each hospital and birthing center shall designate a staff member  
37 to serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and doula  
38 organizations in order to provide information concerning the  
39 facility’s policies and procedures adopted pursuant to subsection b.  
40 of this section.

41

42 2. The Commissioner of Health may adopt rules and regulations  
43 in accordance with the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L. 1968,  
44 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) as the commissioner deems necessary to  
45 effectuate the purposes of this act.

46

47 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

1 STATEMENT

2

3 This bill requires hospitals that provide maternity services and  
4 birthing centers licensed in this State to adopt and maintain written  
5 policies and procedures authorizing a patient to select a doula of the  
6 patient's choice to accompany the patient within the facility's  
7 premises for the purposes of providing support before, during, and  
8 after labor and childbirth.

9 Under the provisions of the bill, each hospital and birthing center  
10 will be required to provide a written copy of those policies and  
11 procedures to: each health care provider providing maternity services  
12 at the facility; each patient receiving maternity services at the  
13 facility; and any other person, at the request of the patient.

14 Each hospital and birthing center will be required to post a notice  
15 of the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill  
16 in a conspicuous place in the room of any patient admitted to the  
17 facility for maternal services and on the facility's Internet website.

18 Each hospital and birthing center will designate a staff member to  
19 serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and doula  
20 organizations in order to provide information concerning the  
21 facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill.

# ASSEMBLY HEALTH COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **ASSEMBLY, No. 5739**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 18, 2023

The Assembly Health Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5739.

As amended, this bill requires hospitals that provide maternity services and birthing centers licensed in this State to adopt and maintain written policies and procedures authorizing a patient to select a doula of the patient's choice to accompany the patient within the facility's premises for the purposes of providing support before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

Under the provisions of the bill, each hospital and birthing center will be required to provide a written copy of those policies and procedures to: each health care provider providing maternity services at the facility; each patient receiving maternity services at the facility; and any other person, at the request of the patient.

Each hospital and birthing center will be required to post a summary of the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill on the facility's Internet website.

Each hospital and birthing center will designate a staff member to serve as a liaison between the facility and doulas and doula organizations in order to provide information concerning the facility's policies and procedures adopted pursuant to the bill.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments:

- 1) revise the definition of "hospital"; and
- 2) only require hospitals and birthing centers to post a summary of the facility's policies and procedures on the facility's website.

# First Lady Tammy Murphy Celebrates Signing of Doula Access Bill

01/16/2024

## Legislation Ensures Doulas' Access to Hospitals and Birthing Facilities to Accompany Pregnant Mothers

**TRENTON** – First Lady Tammy Murphy today celebrated Governor Phil Murphy's signing of [S-4119/A-5739](#), which ensures every mother has the right to a doula in a hospital or birthing center. On November 20, 2023, the [First Lady held a roundtable discussion at University Hospital in Newark](#) to discuss maternal and infant health progress in New Jersey and announce the introduction of the bill in the Assembly. The bill unanimously passed both houses on January 8, 2024 before reaching the Governor's desk.

Under the bill, hospitals and birthing centers must develop and maintain policies that allow doulas to accompany patients before, during, and after labor and childbirth. These facilities will also be required to publicly post their policies and designate a contact to maintain communications between their staff, the doula community, and patients.

"Evidence shows that doulas help reduce birth complications, lower rates of C-sections, improve mental health, and provide overall essential support and advocacy during the birth process, making them an indispensable part of a mother's health care team," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "Today's bill, which ensures doulas are afforded the respect they deserve as a critical care team member with access to birthing hospitals and centers, prioritizes the health of New Jersey's mothers and is another significant step toward our goal of becoming the safest and most equitable state in the nation to deliver and raise a baby. I am incredibly grateful to our many partners who have supported the work of Nurture NJ over years – none of our accomplishments, including today's bill signing, would be possible without their collaboration."

"Doulas play an essential role in a birthing person's care team, providing support that has been demonstrated to reduce maternal mortality disparities," **said Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Kaitlan Baston**. "Through the Doula Learning Collaborative, we are working to train and increase the workforce of community doulas and community health workers to support families throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. I am excited that birthing people will have increasing access to doulas in hospital settings as a result of this legislation."

In the six years since Governor Murphy took office, several steps have been taken to promote doula services and program. Today's bill signing addresses two key recommendations within the First Lady's [Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan](#):

1. Develop a communications plan to promote the benefits of midwifery and community doula models of care; and
2. New Jersey hospitals should institute systemic changes to accommodate doulas and safe birth practices.

Since 2018 through First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ initiative, Governor Murphy and legislative partners have taken several steps and included millions of dollars of funding towards doula services and programs. The Governor's Fiscal Year 2020 budget included \$1 million to implement doula coverage through NJ FamilyCare, which is New Jersey's Medicaid program. Medicaid officially began to cover doula care in 2021, making New Jersey the third state in the nation to expand this coverage and the first state to require doula care to be community doula trained – ensuring culturally competent care – to qualify for Medicaid reimbursement.

Additionally, the Governor included \$15 million in his Fiscal Year 2023 budget to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for perinatal, midwifery, and community doula care. This increase provided community doulas a maximum \$1,165 reimbursement for labor support and eight additional perinatal visits, up from \$900. The Fiscal Year 2024 budget also included funding to continue the training of community doulas throughout New Jersey. Since 2018, this continued effort of Nurture NJ and the NJ Department of Health has resulted in the training of over 250 new doulas in the heart of communities most impacted by high maternal mortality.

The primary sponsors of this bill are Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz and Assemblywoman Shanique Speight. Other prime sponsors of the bill include Senator Nellie Pou as well as Assemblymembers Shavonda Sumter, Annette Quijano, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson Senators. Co-sponsors of the bill include Senator Renee Burgess, Assemblywoman Pamela Lampitt, Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin, Assemblywoman Lisa Swain and former Assemblywoman Gabriela Mosquera. Former Assemblywoman Mila Jasey was also a sponsor of the bill before her retirement in December 2023.

"We should know what our rights are, and all of the services that are available before, during, and after giving birth," **said Senate Majority Leader Ruiz**. "Having access to a trained professional who is completely focused on the well-being of the mother is critical. The Administration and Legislature have been keenly focused on improving the maternal health outcomes of all women, and we must continue to make investments in our hospitals and the organizations that have proven to elevate those efforts."

"Supporting doulas is part of supporting women and combatting maternal and infant mortality," **said Senator Pou**. "Doulas can help a mother follow their birth plan and avoid unnecessary, potentially dangerous interventions, such as C-Sections for low-risk pregnancies."

"In communities, particularly those of color, where challenging birthing experiences persist, this bill is a beacon of hope. It ensures that every parent, irrespective of background, has access to the resources necessary for a safe and empowering birthing journey," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. "Doulas, as tireless advocates, play a vital role in amplifying the voices of mothers in need, contributing to a more inclusive and compassionate maternal care system."

"In the state of New Jersey, Black mothers are 6.6 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than their white counterparts. This initiative is ultimately a crucial lifeline," **Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter, Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus**. "This bill is a step in the right direction to help eradicate racial disparities in childbirth. By championing this bill, we are taking a decisive step toward transforming New Jersey into a state where every mother, regardless of race or background, receives the adequate care and support she deserves. This initiative is a testament to our state's commitment to health equity and our dedication to the well-being of every family in our state."

"The disparities in maternal and infant health are not just statistics, they represent real challenges faced by my constituents every day. The signing of this bill, ensuring that all mothers have access to doula support, is a critical step towards addressing these disparities and ensuring equitable, compassionate care for every mother and child in New Jersey. Drawn from the values instilled by my great grandmother, who served as a midwife in Puerto Rico, I am committed to championing policies that uplift and support the health and well-being of all women, especially those from historically underserved communities. Together, with initiatives like the First Lady's Nurture NJ program, we will improve the lives of our communities, particularly Black and Latino mothers and babies, across our state," **said Majority Conference Leader Annette Quijano**.

"Empowering pregnant individuals with the support of a doula not only enhances their physical and emotional well-being but also nurtures a sense of confidence, ensuring a journey through childbirth marked by compassion, understanding, and strength," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "Supporting mothers of color is not just an act of compassion; it's a commitment to breaking down barriers, fostering equity, and ensuring every mother receives the respect, care, and opportunities she deserves for a brighter future."

"NurtureNJ, under the leadership of First Lady Tammy Murphy, is one of the most comprehensive undertakings dedicated to improving black infant and maternal health outcomes in New Jersey history. As a former public health nurse and long-time lactation consultant, I know that the bill signed today, a collaboration with legislators, stakeholders and advocates, continues the endeavor to achieve substantial and necessary short and long-term outcomes. I am privileged to have contributed to this extraordinary effort," **said Former Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**.

"The signing of S4119/A5739 will guide the normalcy of a Doula as part of the birth team in NJ's hospitals. It has been challenging navigating different hospitals, to support clients, as some hospitals were "making-up" the policies depending on who was on staff when I arrived. Having a person to communicate with or policy availability on a website will help clients/patients and doulas. I feel this will also help facilitate communication with Healthcare Providers/staff and Doulas," **said Tonique Griffin, Doula, Maternal and Child Health Northern New Jersey**.

"This new legislation strengthens and enhances access for doula care in all 21 counties in NJ so women and families can be assured their doula can be part of their birth experience," **said Jill Wodnick, Doula, Childbirth Educator and Maternal Health Policy Expert at Montclair State University.**

"Governor Murphy's signing of Senate Bill 4119 reaffirms the significance of doulas as trained professionals who play an important role in the medical team. It is crucial to have written policies and procedures that support a patient's choice to engage with a doula throughout the state, to strengthen our system of care and improve birth outcomes for all women. Most importantly, it empowers women to take an active role in the way they want to experience one of the most significant events in their lives - becoming a mom. As an organization we work closely with doulas and birthing persons, we are grateful for the opportunity to have our Safer Childbirth Cities Coordinator, Uzo Achebe, and Sarah Stecker, our External Relations Manager, recently testified to educate about their experiences in the doula space, as advocates for the BIPOC communities they serve. We are proud of the progress we have made in the state of NJ in recent years, and we look forward to educating our doulas as well as our clients about this new law," **said Maritza I. Raimundi-Petroski, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Prevention Programs, and Community Engagement, The Children's Home Society of New Jersey.**