



### **About the Mamas Caucus:**

#### **Goal:**

The Mamas Caucus is organized around advocating for mothers of color and their families and empowering them to be engaged and hold those in charge accountable to make the changes they want to see. Policies that directly benefit women physically, mentally, and financially are not just a request, but a necessity. Plans to implement accessible childcare, fair paid leave, and programs that deliver on basic needs are crucial steps towards equitable growth in America for women and working families. With the Mamas Caucus, women of color will have a voice in the legislative decisions that impact them and their loved ones, while improving the lives of vulnerable populations.

#### **Policy Priorities:**

- **Affordable Childcare**
  - For so long, women have been expected to care for children and aging family members, cooking, and keeping house. This societal expectation causes many women to bear the burden of caring for others and making the additional financial sacrifices to do so.
  - The Mamas Caucus will work to build childcare policies that fully support every family, while decreasing the income gap of early educators and caregivers.
  - This is only possible if the federal government invests in affordable, high-quality childcare that allows families to pay no more than 7% of their income on childcare. It must be available nationwide and pay providers a living wage.
- **Reproductive Justice**
  - Infant & Maternal Mortality and Maternal Incarceration are two issues plaguing women of color. They deserve urgent attention and are often left out of the conversation.
  - Although children are born in prison, there are no current national policies in the U.S. that decide what should happen to these mothers and their newborn infants both during and after childbirth.
- **Paid Family and Medical Leave**
  - The U.S. is one of the only industrialized countries that does not offer a single day of paid family and medical leave, and low-wage and part-time workers, a majority of which are women, are less likely to have access to paid leave days.
  - Since women have a higher probability of having caregiving responsibilities on top of their paid employment, including caring for elderly parents, children, or ill spouses/partners, an absence of paid sick days leads women with no choice but to forgo pay to meet their families' health care needs.

- The Mamas Caucus will work to establish a national policy of Paid Family and Medical Leave, where all workers will be entitled to 12 weeks of paid leave.
- **Basic Needs**
  - All families deserve the best chances for long-term success. This requires policies that meet all families' basic needs, including equitable family and children's healthcare, access to housing and necessary utilities, an increased minimum wage, and pay equity.

#### Statistics:

- **Affordable Childcare**
  - Early care and education providers earn wages that average \$10.72/hour, while statistics show that the living wage in the U.S. is at least \$16.54 per hour.
  - Young adults have reported childcare expenses as the top reason they are having fewer children than they would like.
  - Families with children under age 5 that pay for childcare, average childcare spending amounts to nearly 10% of the average family income, which is 40% higher than the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' definition of affordability.
- **Paid Family and Medical Leave**
  - Only 21 percent of U.S. workers have access to paid family leave from an employer.
  - More than 78% of food service and hotel workers do not have a single paid sick day.
  - Over 30 million workers, including 67% of low-wage workers, do not have access to a single paid leave day.
- **Reproductive Justice**
  - An estimated 1 in 25 women inmates in the United States is pregnant.
  - Approximately 80 women die each year in Michigan due to pregnancy and Black women in Michigan die at a rate more than 4.5 times higher than Non-Hispanic White women.
  - Black infants are now more than twice as likely to die as white infants, a disparity greater than existed in 1850.

#### Key Legislation:

- **[H.R. 6598](#) – End Child Poverty Act:** Replaces the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit with a universal child assistance program and establishes a set monthly assistance payment for each children and dependents of a taxpayer.
  - Sponsor: Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-12)
- **[H.R. 259](#) / [S. 304](#) – End Diaper Need Act:** Provides resources for low-income and middle-class families to help finance diapers for babies, toddlers, and medically complex children and adults
  - Sponsors: Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA-12) & Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
- **[H.R.1911](#) – Child Care is Infrastructure Act:** Establishing grants for childcare facilities and higher education loan repayment/scholarship programs for childcare educators.
  - Sponsor: Rep. Katherine M. Clark (D-MA-05)
- **[H.R.3407](#) / [S. 411](#) – MOMMA's Act:** Creates programs and requirements that reduce maternal mortality, including healthcare cultural competence, Medicaid eligibility, and other benefits for pregnant and postpartum individuals.
  - Sponsors: Rep. Robin L Kelly (D-IL-02) & Sen. Richard J Durbin (D-IL)
- **[H.R.120](#) – SIMARRA Act:** Directs the Bureau of Prisons to create a pilot program for women who have children while incarcerated to reside together in a separate prison housing unit.
  - Sponsor: Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18)
- **[H.R. 1212](#) / [S. 1042](#) – Kira Johnson Act:** The Department of Health and Human Services must supply grants which aid positive maternal health outcomes for racial/ethnic minority groups and other underserved populations.

- Sponsors: Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC-12) & Sen. Raphael G Warnock (D-GA)
- [H.R. 3126](#) / [S. 3239](#) – **Healthy MOM Act**: By increasing insurance coverages, the bill attempts to be “an equalizer for communities of color” while acknowledging the racial disparity in maternal health.
  - Sponsors: Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12) & Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
- [H.R.959](#) / [S. 346](#) – **Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act**: Leads a multi-agency effort, including the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Justice (DOJ), to improve maternal health among racial, ethnic, and other vulnerable populations.
  - Sponsors: Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14) & Sen. Cory A. Booker (D-NJ)