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Representatives Gwen Moore, Lauren Underwood, Alma Adams PhD., Ann McLane Kuster, and Senator Jeanne Shaheen Introduce Bill To Study The Harmful Effects Of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) On Maternal Health

*Today, Representatives Gwen Moore, Lauren Underwood, Alma Adams PhD., Ann McLane Kuster, and Senator Jeanne Shaheen introduced the Protect Moms from Domestic Violence Act to study domestic and sexual violence as a social determinant of health. The bill also awards grants to programs that improve maternal and child health outcomes of survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Representative Moore released the following statement:*

**“Hundreds of thousands of pregnant mothers are survivors of sexual and domestic violence in the United States. Their suffering is often invisible to the public, but the trauma can impact their physical health in and out of the delivery room. We know that during pregnancy, depression and stress can cause a range of adverse pregnancy outcomes, including poor pregnancy weight gain, preterm delivery, and stillbirths. Yet research has focused on the clinical factors of pregnancy rather than the conditions of the mother. This issue disproportionately touches the lives of certain women of color, with the rate of domestic violence amongst Black and Indigenous women is four times higher than the rate for white women.”**

“By closing this research gap and funding studies that examine the link between intimate partner violence and maternal health, policy-makers and health providers can challenge these issues head-on and craft effective solutions to alleviate this public health **emergency**,” said Rep. Gwen Moore.

**“Sexual and domestic violence are pervasive problems in our society that do not discriminate, and that tragically impact expectant mothers. The scope of this problem demands a serious, targeted response, including specific efforts that address the effects this trauma can have on mothers to best protect their health and the well-being of the child. That’s precisely what this legislation aims to do,”** said Senator Jeanne Shaheen. **“Understanding how these types of trauma can manifest in the mother or child are critical to planning for a safe delivery and post-partum care. I’ll always stand up for survivors and keep up efforts in the Senate to keep them safe and bring perpetrators to justice.”**

**“The pandemic made life much worse for people experiencing intimate partner violence. Domestic violence rates have surged, which is a serious risk factor for negative pregnancy outcomes. We need to better understand the drivers of domestic violence and its impacts on pregnancy outcomes so we may take evidence-based actions to protect abuse victims and their children. I am proud to join Congresswoman Moore to introduce the Protecting Moms Against**

Domestic Violence Act," said Rep. Lauren Underwood, co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.

**"As a survivor of intimate partner violence, I can't express how important this legislation is,"** said Rep. Alma Adams, co-founder and co-chair of the Black Maternal Health Caucus.

**"Whether it's in the House of Representatives or the house next door, we must always speak out against the harmful effects of violence, especially against women. Hopefully, by studying the effect of IPV on maternal health, we'll not only improve outcomes for moms and babies, but also give greater weight to calls to end domestic and sexual violence once and for all."**

**"I'm heartbroken by the staggering number of pregnant moms facing domestic and interpersonal violence,"** said Rep. Ann McLane Kuster. **"As a co-chair of the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence, I know that data-informed analysis about the intersectionality of issues like maternal mortality and domestic violence is critical to understanding how to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. I'm proud to team up with Rep. Moore to introduce this important legislation to strengthen research and innovate strategies to protect moms and families."**

**"The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists is pleased to endorse the Protect Moms from Domestic Violence Act,"** said ACOG President J. Martin Tucker, MD, FACOG. **"Health care professionals, and particularly obstetrician-gynecologists, are often the first to offer care to patients who experience intimate partner violence (IPV). We also know that pregnancy is a time of increased risk for those experiencing IPV. As Congress continues its important work to reverse rising maternal mortality rates, it is critical that we better understand and address the role of IPV as a contributor to pregnancy-associated deaths, and support IPV training and education. We thank Representative Moore for her leadership in introducing this important bill."**

**"The American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) supports all efforts to stop domestic violence, especially intimate partner violence against pregnant women. AMWA has for over 100 years worked to support women's health and we recognize that pregnant women are at increased risk for abuse by their partners. This abuse causes physical and mental harm to both mothers and their children. AMWA supports the work needed to promote improvements in research about this topic and the development of programs to prevent domestic violence and support survivors,"** American Medical Women's Association (AMWA).

**"As the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, we have worked for nearly 30 years to improve the health care system's domestic violence prevention and response efforts.**

For the past few years, there has been an increased focus on the preventable poor maternal and infant health outcomes, especially for Black birthing people. Many conversations about improving maternal health have excluded intimate partner violence, even though we know that it is a leading cause of pregnancy associated deaths. **We applaud Rep Moore's leadership in creating the Protect Moms from Domestic Violence Act, which is a critical step in making sure that healthcare is working to prevent domestic violence in perinatal settings, as well supporting survivors and their families,"** said Virginia Duplessis, MSW, Associate Director of Health, Futures Without Violence.

**“At NCDVTMH, we are acutely aware of the connections between intimate partner violence (IPV) and the leading drivers of pregnancy-related deaths - suicide, homicide, and overdose. Yet, all too often, service providers are unaware of these connections or of the multiple barriers survivors face in accessing lifesaving care and support. We thank Rep. Moore for prioritizing survivors and their families by also addressing maternal mortality and health equity,”** said Carole Warshaw, MD, Director, National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health.

*Read more on the Protect Moms from Domestic Violence Act [here](#).*