SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE OF THE BUDGET APPROPRIATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION NECESSARY TO FUND AN EXPANSION OF MED-QUEST COVERAGE TO ALL POST-PARTUM WOMEN FOR A PERIOD OF TWELVE MONTHS FOLLOWING CHILDBIRTH.

WHEREAS, women who are ineligible for post-partum health coverage struggle to get necessary care during the fourth trimester, the twelve weeks following childbirth during which a woman recovers from birth and transitions to nurture and care for her infant; and

WHEREAS, the fourth trimester is a critical time as women are more likely to die of pregnancy-related conditions during this time than during pregnancy or childbirth; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, drug overdoses, suicides and pregnancy-related chronic illnesses, including diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, contribute to a rise in deaths among women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the first twelve months after childbirth; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adequate medical attention could prevent three out of five post-partum deaths; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid pregnancy coverage, which pays for nearly half of all births in the United States, expires sixty days after childbirth, leaving many women without health insurance during this vulnerable time; and

WHEREAS, although women may reapply as a parent after this sixty-day time period, because the income limit for parents is lower, many women are unable to qualify for coverage as a parent; and
WHEREAS, policymakers in at least six states, including California, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Tennessee, are working to extend Medicaid coverage to a full year after childbirth; and

WHEREAS, health agencies in Georgia, Texas, Utah, and Washington recommend similar efforts; and

WHEREAS, according to the Commonwealth Fund, a health care advocacy group, maternal mortality rates, including deaths during and up to one year after pregnancy, are higher in the United States than in other developed nations; and

WHEREAS, while pregnancy-related death rates have dropped worldwide over the past thirty years, these rates have more than doubled in the United States; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of deaths per one hundred thousand live births in the United States has risen from seven in 1987 to seventeen in 2016; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that the Department of Human Services is requested to provide an estimate of the budget appropriation and legislative action necessary to fund an expansion of Med-QUEST coverage to all otherwise eligible post-partum women in the State for a period of twelve months following childbirth; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human Services is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services, Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, Regional Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Oahu Region, and Chair of the
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Hawaii Section.

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