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BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF FRESNO
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. 23-344

**PROCLAIM NOVEMBER 2023 "PREMATURITY)
AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE COUNTY OF FRESNO)**

WHEREAS, preterm birth is defined as the delivery of an infant before 37 weeks of pregnancy, which can cause infant mortality and a lifetime of health complications. Preterm birth is the leading cause of infant mortality for babies under 1 years old in the United States. In Fresno County the preterm birth rate is one of the highest out of any California county at 10.16%, which is higher than the California state average of 8.95%. In Fresno County infant mortality is highest among Black babies at 12.2 per 1000 live births, compared to 2.4 per 1000 live births for white babies, and an overall infant mortality rate of 5.2; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 preterm birth was highest among Black women at a rate of 14.7%, compared to white women at a rate of 9.5%. The average across all races is 10.5% in the United States. Decreasing premature birth requires addressing racial and ethnic disparities in all aspects of healthcare administration and access across federal, state, and local governments. In California, infant mortality among Black infants declines as resources in the neighborhood improve. In the most privileged neighborhoods in California, Black infants are about half as likely to die before their first birthdays as those living in the most disinvested neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, strategies to advance health equity for Black birthing people and their infants include naming structural racism as a key driver of health inequities, and involving the Black community in authentic community engagement that centers their voices and fosters ongoing bi-directional power-sharing relationships; and

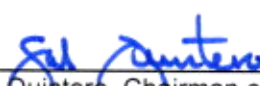
WHEREAS, doulas, who are trained non-medical professionals, provide pregnancy support and have been shown to reduce adverse maternal and infant health outcomes among Black and other underserved communities. Culturally congruent doula support throughout pregnancy and during and after labor can increase breastfeeding initiation and duration. It can also reduce preterm birth rates, low-birthweight births, and other preventable infant and maternal mortality risks for women of color; and

WHEREAS, over 80% of maternal deaths are preventable. The causes of preterm birth are complex and overlapping, requiring policy changes to improve individual and community health. No woman or child should die of a preventable cause. Eliminating racial disparities in health outcomes requires an understanding of the underlying causes of racial disparities in outcomes and a commitment to systematic change. These include actions advancing (1) institutional accountability and data accessibility, (2) Black birth justice workforce development and sustainability, and (3) Community-based care.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fresno County Board of Supervisors hereby proclaim November 2023 Prematurity Awareness Month and encourage all citizens to be aware of the effects of preterm birth and the ways in which we can work together to combat it.


THE FOREGOING, was passed and adopted by the following vote of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno this 7th day of November 2023, to-wit:

AYES: Supervisors Brandau, Magsig, Mendes, Pacheco, Quintero
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAINED: None



Sal Quintero, Chairman of the Board of
Supervisors of the County of Fresno

ATTEST:
BERNICE E. SEIDEL
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Fresno, State of California

By 

Deputy