

April 7, 2021

Dear Members of the DC Council:

We write today on behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington, (JCRC), which represents synagogues, schools and institutions located throughout the District of Columbia. Jewish text and tradition teach that human life is of infinite value and that the preservation of life supersedes almost all other considerations. Accordingly, we have consistently advocated for and supported policies that ensure access to healing and healthcare without discrimination. The need for sound policy is never clearer than when it addresses maternal and pre-natal health. We, therefore, thank Councilmember Henderson for introducing B24-0026 Maternal Health Resources and Access Act of 2021, and Councilmembers Lewis George, Allen, R. White, Nadeau, McDuffie, Cheh, Silverman and Gray for joining her.

We believe the provisions of this legislation – establishing a pilot program for Medicaid reimbursement of doula services, beginning the process of establishing a birthing center east of the river, and providing transportation subsidies to facilitate getting expectant mothers to their prenatal appointments – are important steps toward ensuring meaningful access to healthcare for a subset of DC's residents too often left behind. That women – and particularly Black and Hispanic women – in our Nation's capital consistently struggle with some of the worst maternal health outcomes in the United States simply is unacceptable, and we encourage you to support B24-0026 and its path to begin addressing this injustice.

We look forward to working with you as this legislation moves forward.

Best regards,




Vicki E Fishman  
DC Director, Government Relations



Ron Halber  
Executive Director



Mark Kahan  
DC Commission Co-chair



Thorn Pozen  
DC Commission Co-chair