

## HB598 INTRODUCED



1 HB598

2 L5F5BYW-1

3 By Representatives Travis, Daniels, Lands, Clarke, Drummond,

4 Jackson, Warren, McClammy, Rafferty, Morris, Datcher, Sellers,

5 McCampbell, Moore (M), Bracy, Tillman, Lawrence, Chestnut,

6 Hassell, Hall, Ensler, Hollis, Gray

7 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund

8 First Read: 10-Mar-26



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

SYNOPSIS:

This bill creates the Rural Maternal and Infant Health Equity Act to improve birth outcomes in rural communities by expanding access to prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care through midwifery and doula support, rural obstetric workforce development, and culturally responsive community-based services.

This bill will also create the Rural Maternal and Infant Health Equity Program Fund.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to maternal and infant health disparities in rural areas; to establish a grant program to support midwife and doula services; to require Medicaid and all insurers to cover midwife and doula services; to establish a grant program to support rural birth centers; and to create the Rural Maternal and Infant Health Equity Program Fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. This act shall be known as the Rural Maternal and Infant Health Equity Act.

Section 2. As used in this act, unless otherwise



## HB598 INTRODUCED

29 specified or unless the context requires otherwise, the  
30 following terms will have the following meanings:

31 (1) DEPARTMENT. The Alabama Department of Public  
32 Health.

33 (2) DOULA. A trained, nonclinical birth support  
34 professional who provides physical, emotional, and  
35 informational assistance.

36 (3) MIDWIFE. A certified nurse-midwife, certified  
37 professional midwife, or other licensed midwifery provider  
38 licensed by the State Board of Midwifery.

39 (4) RURAL AREA. Any area within this state not included  
40 within the boundaries of any incorporated city or town having  
41 a population in excess of 25,000 inhabitants, according to the  
42 last federal decennial census.

43 Section 3. (a) The department shall support rural  
44 access to midwifery and doula services by offering grants to  
45 integrate maternity care providers into hospitals and clinics.

46 (b) The State Board of Midwifery shall license and  
47 regulate community-based maternity care providers.

48 (c) Cultural competency and evidence-based training  
49 shall be required.

50 Section 4. (a) Subject to prior approval or a waiver  
51 from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services, the  
52 Alabama Medicaid Agency shall provide coverage for midwife and  
53 doula services.

54 (b) Every insurer authorized to offer, sell, or deliver  
55 insurance in this state shall include coverage for midwife and  
56 doula services.



## HB598 INTRODUCED

57 Section 5. (a) The department shall establish the  
58 Obstetric Workforce Training and Incentive Program to support:

59 (1) Obstetrics and gynecology residencies or rural  
60 clinical rotations;

61 (2) Recruitment incentives for obstetric providers  
62 locating in rural areas; and

63 (3) Loan repayment for at least two years of rural  
64 maternity care service.

65 (b) Priority shall be given to providers trained in  
66 team-based and culturally responsive care.

67 Section 6. (a) The department shall fund locally led  
68 maternal health partnerships to:

69 (1) Deliver prenatal home visits by nurses or  
70 midwives;

71 (2) Complete mobile perinatal clinics; and

72 (3) Complete group prenatal care and peer-led education  
73 for at-risk populations.

74 (b) Grantees must demonstrate engagement of target  
75 communities in program design.

76 Section 7. (a) The department shall offer capital  
77 grants to:

78 (1) Establish new rural birth centers;

79 (2) Expand or modernize obstetric units in rural  
80 hospitals; and

81 (3) Support facilities offering continuous labor  
82 support and postpartum care.

83 (b) Projects must meet safety and licensure standards.

84 Section 8. (a) There is created the Rural Maternal and



## HB598 INTRODUCED

85 Infant Health Equity Program Fund in the State Treasury.

86 (b) The fund is subject to appropriations by the  
87 Legislature and gifts, grants, and other donations received by  
88 the department for the programs and grants described in this  
89 act. The department may not spend appropriations for the  
90 program for the purposes other than those listed in this act.

91 (c) Amounts in the fund shall be budgeted and allotted  
92 in accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-69 and  
93 Sections 41-19-1 through 41-19-12, Code of Alabama 1975.

94 Section 9. This act shall become effective on October  
95 1, 2026.