

# BLACK REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE WEEK OF ACTION (RJWOA) 2021 TOOLKIT

*An Agenda to Shift Policy  
and Change Culture*



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# BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

*Our bodies. Our choices. Our voices.*

Each year, In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda (In Our Own Voice) launches the Black Reproductive Justice Week of Action (RJWOA), in collaboration with our Reproductive Justice (RJ) partner organizations— Black Women for Wellness, Black Women's Health Imperative, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, SisterLove, Inc., SisterReach, SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW, The Afiya Center, and Women With a Vision, Inc. — to amplify our collective voices around policy and culture change issues that are critical to the health and well-being of Black women and the Reproductive Justice movement.

This year, RJWOA is an opportunity to mobilize around the newly released Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda and urge members of Congress to take heed of legislative recommendations that will help to liberate Black women, girls, femmes and gender-expansive individuals. It is time that they HEAR OUR VOICES!



Graphics to share.

**#RJWOA21**  
**#HEAROURVOICES**  
**#LISTENTOBLACKWOMEN**



# LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Join our daily events and calls to action to let your voice be heard! Click each event title to register (no registration required for Monday's or Friday's events). Share our [RJWOA graphics](#) and be sure to tag us (@BlackWomensRJ) in all your posts!

## MONDAY, SEPT. 27

### The Policy Landscape and What's at Stake, 7-8 PM ET

Tune in to this virtual kickoff event with Radio One on MyMajicDC.com to learn about the Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda, the current political attacks we are countering, and ways to get involved during our 7th Annual RJWOA!

#### Speakers:

- Marcela Howell, President and CEO, In Our Own Voice
- Marsha Jones, CEO and Co-Founder, The Afiya Center
- Dr. Jamila Perritt, President and CEO, Physicians for Reproductive Health
- Charity Woods Barnes, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice

Share one of these graphics and a sample post with your networks to voice your support for RJWOA:

- I support [#RJWOA21](#) and the Black RJ Policy Agenda with the hope that Congress will embrace policy recommendations and make legislative changes that will lead to the liberation of Black women, femmes, girls, and gender-expansive people: [blackrj.org/rjwoa21](https://blackrj.org/rjwoa21) (or link in bio).
- In Our Own Voice's Reproductive Justice Week of Action (RJWOA) is a week-long opportunity to elevate the often neglected voices of Black women, girls, femmes, and gender-expansive people. It's time to hear our voices: [blackrj.org/rjwoa21](https://blackrj.org/rjwoa21) (or link in bio). [#RJWOA21](#) [#HEAROURVOICES](#)

# LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

## TUESDAY, SEPT. 28

### Congressional Briefing: Why Black Moms Need the Momnibus and Postpartum Medicaid Coverage Now, 11 AM-12 PM ET

Join In Our Own Voice for a briefing on Black Maternal Health, featuring remarks by Congresswoman Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14).

**Moderator:** Marcela Howell, President and CEO, In Our Own Voice.

#### **Speakers:**

- Angela D. Aina, Executive Director, Black Mamas Matter Alliance
- Dr. Joia Crear Perry, Founder and President, National Birth Equity Collaborative
- Aza Nedhari, Executive Director, Mamatoto Village, Inc.
- Chanel L. Porchia, Founder and CEO, Ancient Song Doula Services

**Urge members of Congress** to advance the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 and share one of these sample posts with your social networks:

- Reproductive Justice can only be achieved when Black women, femmes, girls & gender-expansive individuals can experience pregnancy and childbirth without endangering our lives. Support the Momnibus Act and help advance birthing justice: [bit.ly/MaternalMomnibus](https://bit.ly/MaternalMomnibus) (or link in bio). #RJWOA21 #Momnibus
- Urge members of Congress to pass the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 and permanent yearlong postpartum Medicaid coverage for every mother in every state NOW: [bit.ly/MaternalMomnibus](https://bit.ly/MaternalMomnibus) (or link in bio). #RJWOA21 #BuildBackBetter
- Thank you @RepUnderwood and @RepAdams for your tireless work leadership on the @BMHCaucus. Now is the time to invest in Black Maternal Health. #Momnibus #BuildBackBetter

# LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

## WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 29

Hear from our Black RJ state partners and allies on two virtual advocacy panels about their movement-building at a state level, moderated by Lexi White, Director of State Policy and Advocacy, In Our Own Voice, and Cherisse Scott, Founder and CEO of SisterReach.

### Beyond Binaries: Building State Movements for LGBTQIA+ Liberation , 12-1 PM ET

#### Speakers:

- Céshia Elmore, Community Organizer, New Voices for Reproductive Justice
- Agbo Ikor, Director of Programs, SPARK Reproductive Justice Now
- Elise Saulsberry, Deputy Director, SisterReach

### Decriminalizing Blackness: Dismantling Systems That Punish Our Bodies, 6-7 PM ET

#### Speakers:

- Erin Grant, Deputy Director, Abortion Care Network
- Dr. Jamila Perritt, President and CEO, Physicians for Reproductive Health
- Aimee Registe, Policy and Advocacy Program Manager, SisterLove
- Dominique Symone, Organizational Strategist, The Afiya Center

Visit our [RJWOA landing page](#) to donate to our partners and help advance their work. Share one of these sample posts with your social networks:

- A complete vision of Reproductive Justice includes & prioritizes the unique needs and vulnerabilities of Black LGBTQ+ women, femmes, girls & gender-expansive people. Support the Black RJ Policy Agenda and urge Congress to pass the Equality Act: [blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy](https://blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy) (or link in bio). #RJWOA21
- Blocking #abortionaccess isn't about a commitment to "life"; it's about controlling the lives of women, especially Black women, & violating our autonomy. We must continue the fight to ensure that every pregnant person has the right to make decisions about their own body. #RJWOA21

# LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

## THURSDAY, SEPT. 30

**Voter Suppression is Reproductive Oppression: Building Power Against State Attacks on Voting Rights and Reproductive Justice, 1-2 PM ET**

Join us for a virtual briefing on Voting Rights and Reproductive Justice, moderated by Lexi White, Director of State Policy and Advocacy, In Our Own Voice

### Speakers:

- Carmen Alexander, Chief of Staff and Deputy Director of Operations, New Voices for Reproductive Justice
- Edwith Theogene, Director of Advocacy, Generation Progress
- Lauren Bealore, Director of Democracy, State Innovation Exchange
- State Representative Kim Schofield, District 60, Georgia

**Sign our petition** and urge your senators to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act immediately.

Sept. 30 also marks the anniversary of the Hyde Amendment. Support the Women's Health Protection Act to end restrictions on abortions. Share one of our **"hands off" graphics** or one of these sample posts to support abortion access:

- Congress must end restrictions on federal funding for abortion services. Support the Black RJ Policy Agenda and urge Congress to pass the EACH Act to end abortion coverage bans: [blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy](https://blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy) (or link in bio). #RJWOA21 #HEAROURVOICES
- Legislators and other elected officials must respect science, ethics, and women's bodily autonomy, and undo medically unnecessary barriers to abortion care. We must demand Congress pass the Women's Health Protection Act #WHPA: [blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy](https://blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy) (or link in bio). #RJWOA21 #HEAROURVOICES

# LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

## FRIDAY, OCT. 1

**The Future of RJ: Activism on HBCU Campuses, 11-11:40 AM ET**

Join us on Instagram Live (@blackwomensrj) to hear from our **Next Generation Leadership Institute** Fellows about their on-campus mobilizing for Reproductive Justice, moderated by Giovanteey Bishop, Senior Program Manager, Next Generation Leadership Institute, In Our Own Voice.

### Speakers:

- Asia Brown, Spelman University
- Madison Harris, Howard University
- Shalae Matthews, Lincoln University
- Amber Wynne, Hampton University

This is our last day of RJWOA, but share one of these sample posts to let everyone know that the work and the fight continues:

- **#RJWOA21** is drawing to a close today, but our fight for Black Reproductive Justice continues. Black women, femmes, girls and gender-expansive people in the U.S. have been marginalized for too long. It is time our voices were heard: [blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy](https://blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy) (or link in bio). **#HEAROURVOICES**
- The issues and multiple oppressions faced by Black women, femmes, girls and gender-expansive people have long been ignored by elected officials. Well, no more. It is time to make sure our voices are heard: [blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy](https://blackrj.org/blackrjpolicy). **#LISTENTOBLACKWOMEN #HEAROURVOICES #RJWOA21**



# DAY ON THE HILL

## Black Reproductive Justice Week of Action 2021 Virtual Advocacy Day for Maternal Health, Tuesday, September 28

The focus of the legislative meetings will be to support the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 and permanent, mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage. Congress must invest in Black Maternal health as part of the current budget reconciliation process through the Build Back Better Act. The passage of this bill is critical to saving Black moms now.

### Preparation for the Meetings:

- **Identify Roles for the Meeting** - For group visits or visits with more than one person, be sure to plan who will speak on each issue. This will ensure that all speakers are prepared and that no issues are forgotten during the meeting. You should identify a “facilitator” who initiates the virtual meeting, frames the issues, makes sure that all the issues are covered, keeps track of time and introduces each presenter.
- **Virtual Meeting Best Practices**
  - Make sure your internet connection is stable and consistent. If possible, connect your streaming device to an ethernet cable to guarantee secure connection.
  - Join your virtual meetings in a quiet place with minimum potential for background noise (i.e. sirens from the street or a ceiling fan).
  - Use headphones with a microphone for maximum audio quality.
  - Mute your microphone when you are not speaking to avoid unnecessary background noise when someone else is speaking. Unmute when you are ready to speak again.
  - **Background:** Find a background with minimum distractions. A plain, neutral wall is best.
  - Test your video and audio before entering the meeting.
- **During and After the Elected Official Meeting**
  - **Be Prepared** - Review your talking points prior to the meeting. If you cannot answer a question, tell them you will get back to them with the information and be sure to do so or ask a colleague who can get the information to follow up. Anticipate questions or arguments against your position on an issue.

# DAY ON THE HILL

- **During and After the Elected Official Meeting Cont.**
  - **Be on Time** - It is very important to arrive on time. As a courtesy, initiate the virtual call early so that meeting participants are not sitting in the waiting room.
  - **Keep it Local** - If possible, explain your position in terms that relate to the Member's district or state. You are best positioned to explain how these policies impact your community.
  - **Thank the Member or Staff** - If you know the office you are meeting with is supportive of the policies for which you are advocating, thank the Member at the beginning of the meeting.
  - **Follow Up** - Be sure to send a thank-you email to people with whom you met; reiterate your points, provide them with any information you promised and thank them for their time.

## Talking Points

**Overall message:** Black moms are disproportionately impacted by the U.S. maternal health crisis and Congress must take action to ensure Black people can have healthy pregnancies, safe and respectful birthing experiences and comprehensive postpartum care. Congress must pass the Build Back Better Act and invest in Black maternal health now.

**The Overall Ask:** When you discuss issues with a Member or staff, you should always have an "ask," i.e., pass this bill. This should be the first thing that you do after introducing yourself or the group. Our ask for the lobby day is:

- **SUPPORT** the investments in Black maternal health from the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 and permanent yearlong postpartum Medicaid coverage for every mom in every state as part of the passage of the Build Back Better Act.

**Ask to Supportive House Offices:** Thank you for your ongoing support of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act and investing in Black maternal health. We are thrilled to see the Momnibus investments and mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage provisions included in the Build Back Better Act and we look forward to this reconciliation bill passing the Senate and signed into law. Black mothers' lives depend on it.

# DAY ON THE HILL

**Ask to Supportive Senate Offices:** Thank you for your ongoing support of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act and investing in Black maternal health. We urge you to include the Momnibus investments and mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage provisions in the Build Back Better Act reconciliation package. This historic bill must be signed into law. Black mothers' lives depend on it.

## **Background on the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 (H.R.959/S.346):**

- The Momnibus Act is a suite of 12 bills meant to add to existing maternal health legislation and address each unique dimension of the Black maternal health crisis. It includes critical investments in community-based organizations, policies to grow and diversify the perinatal workforce, to expand access to maternal mental health services, measures to address the impacts of climate change on maternal and infant health outcomes, and provisions to protect pregnant people during this pandemic and future public health emergencies.
- Momnibus investments are included in the budget reconciliation package: the Build Back Better Act. This package is the vehicle to pass the most critical pieces of the Momnibus this year. There may not be another opportunity.

## **Background on mandatory yearlong postpartum Medicaid coverage:**

- Postpartum care is integral to preserving maternal health and complications that can occur months after birth. All moms, in every state, need access to high-quality postpartum care to ensure their health postpartum.
- The Medicaid program covers almost half of all births in the U.S. and disproportionately serves communities of color.
- Permanently extending Medicaid coverage from the current allotment of 60 days to one year postpartum would help postpartum people, no matter where they live, access lifesaving care after pregnancy and ensure there are no gaps in coverage when families need it the most.
- Why a mandatory program? Many of the states with residents most in need of no or low-cost maternal health care will not be willing or financially able to opt into an extension without a permanent, national requirement and increased federal funding.
- A mandatory and permanent coverage extension requirement is also included in the budget reconciliation package: the Build Back Better Act. This package is the vehicle to pass this provision this year. There may also not be another opportunity to do so.

# OUR SPEAKERS

Follow and tag our speakers on social media using their handles below!



**Angela Aina**  
IG: @BlackMamasMatter  
FB: @BlackMamasMatter  
Twitter: @BlkMamasMatter



**Carmen Alexander**  
IG: @carmscanvas



**Lauren Bealore**  
IG: @djbeaz  
FB: Lauren Bealore



**Giovanteey Bishop**  
All: @BlackWomensRJ



**Asia Brown**  
IG: @\_asiabrown



**Céschia Elmore**  
IG: @newvoicesrj  
Twitter: @newvoicesrj



**Erin Grant**  
IG: @Erinajag



**Madison Harris**  
IG: @madiison.harris



**Marcela Howell**  
All: @BlackWomensRJ



**Agbo Ikor**  
IG: @hags\_and\_kisses  
FB: Agbo Ikor  
Twitter: @agboikor



**Marsha Jones**  
IG: @marshakaye2000



**Shalae Matthews**  
IG: @Laelifee



**Aza Nedhari**  
IG: @msnedhari  
FB: Aza Nedhari  
Twitter: @msnedhari



**Dr. Jamila Perritt**  
IG: @Jamilaperritt  
FB: Jamila Burgess Perritt  
Twitter: @Reprightsdc



**Dr. Joia Crear Perry**  
IG: @doccrearperry  
FB: Joia Crear Perry



**Chanel L. Porchia**  
IG: @chanel\_porchia  
FB: Chanel Porchia  
Twitter: @ChanelPorchia



**Aimee Registe**  
IG: @aimee\_registe\_  
FB: Aimee Registe



**Elise Saulsberry**  
IG: reconciledpastor  
FB: Elise Saulsberry



**Cherisse Scott**  
All: @SisterReach



**Dominique Symone**  
IG: @dominiquesymone



**Edwith Theogene**  
IG: @edwith  
FB: Edwith Theogene  
Twitter: @whoisEdwith



**Lexi White**  
All: @BlackWomensRJ



**Charity Woods-Barnes**  
All: @IV4RJ



**Amber Wynne**  
IG: @amberivymabel

# CONTACT INFORMATION

**Thank you for supporting the Black RJ Week of Action and helping to make sure that the voices of Black women, femmes, girls, and gender-expansive people are heard loud and clear.**

**For questions regarding communications or social media, please contact Racine Tucker-Hamilton, Vice President of Communications, at [Racine@blackrj.org](mailto:Racine@blackrj.org), or Kristenn Fortson, Director of Content and Digital Strategies, at [Kristenn@blackrj.org](mailto:Kristenn@blackrj.org).**

**For questions regarding legislation or policy, please contact Jennifer Jacoby, Vice President of Government Affairs, at [Jennifer@blackrj.org](mailto:Jennifer@blackrj.org), Lexi White, Director of State Policy and Advocacy, at [Lexi@blackrj.org](mailto:Lexi@blackrj.org) or Camille Kidd, Manager of Government Affairs, at [Camille@blackrj.org](mailto:Camille@blackrj.org).**