



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

May 5, 2023

The Honorable Akilah Weber
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 4130
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: Support for AB 1701 (Weber)—California Perinatal Equity Initiative

Dear Assemblymember Weber,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach, I write in support of AB 1701. This bill would expand the definition of local health jurisdictions eligible to apply for the California Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI) to include city health departments, rather than limiting the funding to only county health departments. Since 1989, the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) has been funded to implement the Black Infant Health (BIH) Program. PEI funds will enable the Health Department to strengthen and fortify a comprehensive perinatal system of care for pregnant and parenting Black women.

According to the City's [Community Health Assessment](#), maternal and infant mortality rates show clear inequities by race, which is exacerbated by historic under-investment in family support and quality health care programs. AB 1701 will provide resources to expand the reach and impact of PEI interventions provided under the BIH Program by allowing both counties and cities with their own health department to apply for the funds. PEI interventions would provide complementary services designed to improve outcomes for Black mothers and infants, promote the support roles of fathers and partners for women during and after pregnancy, and foster statewide program fidelity which supports local health jurisdictions to maintain congruent efforts.

AB 1701 aligns with the City's efforts to address social determinants of health, improve maternal and infant health and development, and cultivate strong and healthy communities. As a local health jurisdiction, the City of Long Beach has a unique ability to successfully implement PEI-funded measures. This bill fosters a community-driven response to Black maternal and infant birth disparity through planning and implementing a vital component in the overall effort to address this issue. For these reasons, the City supports AB 1701.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, State Senate, 33rd District
The Honorable Mike Gipson, State Assembly, 65th District
The Honorable Josh Lowenthal, State Assembly, 69th District