



April 11, 2024

The Honorable Assemblymember Mia Bonta
Chair
Assembly Health Committee
1020 N Street, Suite 385
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SUPPORT AB 1895 (Weber)

Dear Assemblymember Bonta,

On behalf of Consumer Watchdog, I am writing in **SUPPORT** of **Assembly Bill 1895, Public Health: Maternity Ward Closures**. AB 1895 would require the Department of Health Care Access and the California Department of Public Health to conduct a community impact assessment to determine that there are adequate local maternity services in the area, and a required public hearing to provide the public with the opportunity to provide input and receive information on other resources. Currently, pregnant mothers impacted by hospital labor and delivery unit closures are left with limited to no resources and do not have the resources needed to travel to another hospital or obtain alternative maternity services.

As Californians and our legislature work on the many factors that are contributing to the maternal mortality crisis our state is facing, the Assembly Health Committee's support of AB 1895 is critical.

As you know, at least 46 hospitals in California have closed or suspended their labor and delivery units since 2012. Currently, Scripps Mercy Chula Vista hospital in San Diego is planning on closing their labor and delivery unit in June and Adventist Health Simi Valley will close its Labor/Delivery and NICU services on May 8, 2024.

The closure of labor and delivery units is obviously a crisis for pregnant mothers and their families, but it has also become a crisis for labor and delivery physicians, nurses, and staff. Staff frustration was on display during a Chula Vista City Council meeting last month where physicians, nurses, and pregnant mothers asked for intervention and an impact investigation by the California Department of Public Health regarding access

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to maternity services. Their requests for an impact investigation were later denied by the California Department of Public Health.

Women in the communities surrounding Chula Vista that are currently pregnant have no idea where they can go to deliver their babies. This is unacceptable.

We believe that AB 1895's call for the Department of Health Care Access and the California Department of Public Health to conduct a community impact assessment to determine that there are adequate local maternity services in the area and a required public hearing to provide the public with the opportunity to provide input and receive information on other resources is a step in the right direction.

The labor and delivery unit closures are prevalent in rural and lower income areas and are deeply impacting minority families and mothers of a lower socio-economic background. The maternal mortality crisis in our state is disproportionately impacting these same communities.

Consumer Watchdog is pleased to **SUPPORT AB 1895 and urge your Aye vote.**

Sincerely,

Michelle Monseuati-Ramos

Consumer Watchdog