



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

Telephone – Dial 311
www.houstontx.gov

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Sam Harless
Chairman, House Select Committee on Health Reform
P.O. Box 2919
Austin, TX 78768

Re: Support for House Bill 12

Dear Chairman Harless and members of House Select Committee on Health Reform,

As Director of Government Relations for Mayor Sylvester Turner, I can tell you the passage of this bill is one of the highest priorities for the City of Houston. I am not alone in that assessment.

State Representative Toni Rose, the only mental health professional serving in the Texas Legislature, has a large coalition supporting her House Bill 12. The City of Houston joins the 162 other organizations in supporting its passage.

The Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity taskforce's top recommendation in its September 2018 report was "increasing access to health services during the year after pregnancy." Patient advocacy organizations note this policy would be the single most effective step the State of Texas can take to combat Post-Partum Depression.

In 2021, the Texas Legislature took the first step in expanding the coverage period for new mothers from 60 days to 6 months. The Legislature should continue its commitment to Texas families by extending the existing maternal Medicaid benefit to one year to reduce healthcare costs, uncompensated emergency room visits, and preventable deaths.

Mayor Turner recently joined other Big City Mayors throughout Texas to support this legislative change, and specifically thanked Speaker Dade Phelan for prioritizing this item.

We thank the Chairman, Rep. Rose, and Speaker Phelan for the opportunity to support this critical legislation.

Very appreciative,

Bill Kelly
Director of Government Relations
Mayor's Office, City of Houston