



# CITY OF HOUSTON

**Sylvester Turner**

Mayor

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May 16, 2023

The Honorable Lois Kolkhorst  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
P.O. Box 2919  
Austin, TX 78768

Re: Support for House Bill 12

Dear Chairman Kolkhorst and members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,  
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 Chair Kolkhorst and members of the Senate for the opportunity to support this critical legislation.

Very appreciative,

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