WHEREAS, the number of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States—the number of women who die during pregnancy or within one year of the end of a pregnancy from a pregnancy complication, a chain of events initiated by pregnancy, or the aggravation of an unrelated condition by the physiologic effects of pregnancy—has continued to rise, despite recent advances in medical science and technology; and

WHEREAS, despite declines in maternal deaths in other parts of the world, the data collected under the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System has shown a steady increase in the number of reported pregnancy-related deaths in the United States, from a low of 7.2 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1987 to 16.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has among the highest rates of pregnancy-associated (47 per 100,000 live births) and pregnancy-related (14 per 100,000 live births) deaths in the United States in 2013-2015, the most recent years for which surveillance data from the New Jersey Maternal Mortality Review Committee (NJMMRC) is available; and

WHEREAS, inequitable maternity care persists such that non-Hispanic Black New Jerseyans (45.5 per 100,000 live births) experience pregnancy-related death at five times the rate of their non-Hispanic White (8.6 per 100,000 live births) counterparts in 2013-2015 and that New Jersey’s five-times disparity exceeds the CDC’s nationwide disparity of three to four times; and

WHEREAS, maternal deaths are just the tip of the iceberg and far more people experience near misses, severe maternal morbidity, and other complications; and

WHEREAS, the first annual and first-in-the-nation Report Card of Hospital Maternity Care released with 2016 data in 2019 demonstrated that Severe Maternal Morbidity (SMM) occurred at a rate of 181.7 per 10,000 delivery hospitalizations and that non-Hispanic Black New Jerseyans experience SMM at higher rates than all other racial and ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, several piecemeal past initiatives have failed to effectuate a reduction in the rate of pregnancy-related deaths, but emerging initiatives in this area by state agencies and dedicated partners are showing promise; and

WHEREAS, responding to these alarming findings, the Murphy Administration has prioritized reductions in maternal mortality, morbidity, and disparities and, on Maternal Health Awareness Day 2019, First Lady Tammy Murphy launched the NurtureNJ campaign with the ambition for New Jersey to become the safest place to give birth in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Governor Murphy and Legislators enacted over a dozen laws in the 218th session to monitor the status of maternal health sustainably, incentivize best practices, support healthcare access and reproductive choice, and foster collaboration from the clinic-level to the Cabinet-level; and

WHEREAS, First Lady Tammy Murphy is facilitating action across state government, and the New Jersey Maternal Care Quality Collaborative will launch in 2020 to foster teamwork in the health sector to transform maternal healthcare in the State; and
WHEREAS, programming, policymaking, and payment across state agencies are necessary to prevent pregnancy-related death and disability and to ensure that New Jerseyans receive the right care at the right place at the right time; and

WHEREAS, to help women navigate the health system with dignity, including community-based supports like doulas, community health workers, and lactation consultants as well as resources like shared decision-making tools, bias trainings, and reproductive life plans need to be provided and supported; and

WHEREAS, in order to improve public and professional awareness of the issues related to maternal health and the abhorrent racial disparities that persist, and to promote the various promising initiatives that are being undertaken to reduce maternal mortality, it is both reasonable and appropriate to establish "Maternal Health Awareness Day" in the State and annually invite community members and health care professionals, on that day, to participate in appropriate activities relating to maternal health, safety, and mortality;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip D. Murphy, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

JANUARY 23, 2020
AS
MATERNAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY
in New Jersey.

GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this twenty-third day of January in the year two thousand twenty, the two hundred forty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States.

Lt. GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR