



## Legislation Summary:

### An Act relative to birthing justice

Bill number: S.1415

Sponsor: Senator Liz Miranda

#### **What the bill does, why LWVMA supports or opposes it, and the League position relative to this bill.**

The overall goal of this omnibus bill is to decrease the high rate of maternal and infant deaths and preventable complications. The legislature passed a law establishing a Maternal Health Commission in 2021. The Commission completed a study in 2022 which outlined many ways in which our health care system and cultural biases interact to increase maternal mortality, especially for women of color (Report of the Special Commission on RACIAL INEQUITIES IN MATERNAL HEALTH). S.1415 is an omnibus bill that makes many changes to general law in response to the Special Commission's report. It includes policy that would increase access to midwives, doulas, mental health care and better public health systems for those who need maternal care.

The Leagues of Women Voters of the United States and of Massachusetts have long supported efforts to ensure affordable and equitable access to quality health care for all.

LWVUS believes that access to health care includes the following: preventive care, primary care, maternal and child health care, emergency care, catastrophic care, nursing home care, and mental health care, as well as access to substance abuse programs, health and sex education programs, and nutrition programs (LWVUS *Impact on Issues 2022-24*, p. 146). *Impact on Issues* also recommends applying a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) lens to our work (p. 3) and that every US resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care, and mental health care (p. 137).

One of *Impact on Issues* positions on early intervention for children at risk includes quality health care, including nutrition and prenatal care (p. 152).

LWVMA Where We Stand 2020 reproductive choices positions relevant to S.1415 are an emphasis on preventive measures to avoid unwanted pregnancies, the treatment of abortion as a medical procedure to be decided upon by a woman and her physician, and public funding for birth control and abortion services for the poor (p. 55).

