

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to state-certified doulas; creating s.
3 383.29, F.S.; defining terms; prohibiting persons from
4 using the title "state-certified doula" unless
5 certified under specified provisions; specifying
6 requirements for certification of doulas; prohibiting
7 entities from holding themselves out as providing
8 specified training and education unless approved by
9 the Department of Health for such purpose; requiring
10 the department to adopt rules; requiring the
11 department to ensure that the state certification
12 requirements for doulas reflect national best
13 practices; requiring the department to maintain a
14 public registry of doulas certified to practice in
15 this state; requiring the department to publish a list
16 of entities approved to provide training and education
17 of doulas for certification purposes; providing
18 construction; providing an effective date.

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20 WHEREAS, preterm birth is defined as a live birth before 37
21 completed weeks of gestation and is associated with increased
22 morbidities or ailments, such as cerebral palsy, breathing
23 issues, feeding problems, developmental delay, and vision and
24 hearing problems, and

25 WHEREAS, Florida's preterm birth rate has risen annually

26 | since 2014 to its current average rate of 10.9 percent, higher
 27 | than the national average of 10.5 percent, and

28 | WHEREAS, infant mortality is defined as the death of an
 29 | infant before his or her first birthday, and infant mortality
 30 | rates indicate the overall health of a society, and

31 | WHEREAS, the leading causes of infant mortality are birth
 32 | defects, preterm birth, low birth weight, maternal
 33 | complications, and sudden infant death syndrome, and

34 | WHEREAS, according to the United States Centers for Disease
 35 | Control and Prevention, Florida's infant mortality rate is 5.9
 36 | per 1,000 births, higher than the national average of 5.4, with
 37 | the non-Hispanic black infant mortality rate in Florida being
 38 | the highest, at a rate of 10.6 per 1,000 births, compared to the
 39 | rates of 3.4 for non-Hispanic Asians and 4.5 for non-Hispanic
 40 | whites, and

41 | WHEREAS, doula care is the continuous, one-to-one
 42 | emotional, informational, and physical support provided by a
 43 | nonmedical professional to pregnant women and their families
 44 | during pregnancy and the intrapartum period, and

45 | WHEREAS, a 2017 review by the Cochrane Database of
 46 | Systematic Reviews of 26 trials involving doula care for more
 47 | than 15,000 women in 17 different countries found some improved
 48 | outcomes for women and infants, such as increased spontaneous
 49 | vaginal birth, shorter labor times, decreased cesarean delivery
 50 | and use of regional analgesia, lower 5-minute Apgar scores, and

51 reduced negative childbirth experiences and feelings, and
 52 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that the American College of
 53 Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has acknowledged that the
 54 potential benefits of doula support, such as regular nursing
 55 care for women in labor paired with the continuous one-to-one
 56 emotional support of a doula, is linked with improved outcomes
 57 and delivery experiences for women, and

58 WHEREAS, the state has a compelling interest in
 59 improving maternal and labor outcomes through the use of
 60 state-certified doulas, NOW, THEREFORE,

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 62 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 64 Section 1. Section 383.29, Florida Statutes, is created to
 65 read:

66 383.29 State-certified doulas.-

67 (1) As used in this section, the term:

68 (a) "Department" means the Department of Health.

69 (b) "Doula services" means the provision of physical,
 70 emotional, and informational support by a nonmedical
 71 professional to a pregnant person during the prenatal and
 72 intrapartum periods and during the period up to 1 year
 73 postpartum.

74 (c) "State-certified doula" means a nonmedical
 75 professional trained to provide doula services who has been

76 certified by a national credentialing organization approved by
 77 the department.

78 (2) A person may not use the title "state-certified doula"
 79 unless certified under this section.

80 (3) To be certified as a state-certified doula, a person
 81 must meet all of the following criteria:

82 (a) Has received training and education as a doula from an
 83 entity approved by the department.

84 (b) Provides doula services.

85 (c) Has been certified as a doula by a credentialing
 86 entity approved by the department.

87
 88 However, a doula who does not meet the education and training
 89 requirements of paragraph (a) is still eligible for
 90 certification if he or she is certified as a doula by a national
 91 credentialing organization approved by the department.

92 (4) An entity may not hold itself out as providing
 93 training and education necessary to meet the requirements of
 94 paragraph (3)(a) unless its curriculum and training program have
 95 been approved by the department for such purpose.

96 (5) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
 97 section, including, but not limited to, specifying requirements
 98 for all of the following:

99 (a) Use of the title "state-certified doula."

100 (b) Training and education necessary to satisfy the

101 requirements for certification by the department as a state-
102 certified doula.

103 (6) The department shall ensure that certification
104 requirements for state-certified doulas reflect national best
105 practices pertaining to doula training and certification.

106 (7) The department shall maintain a public registry of
107 state-certified doulas. The department shall also publish a list
108 of entities approved to provide training and education necessary
109 to meet the certification requirements of subsection (3) (a).

110 (8) This section does not prohibit any person not
111 certified under this section from practicing as a doula in this
112 state, provided he or she does not use the title "state-
113 certified doula" or otherwise represent himself or herself as
114 being a state-certified doula.

115 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.