

By Senator Osgood

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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 by the department to provide
17 training and education of doulas for certification
18 purposes; providing construction; providing an
19 effective date.

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

26 WHEREAS, Florida's preterm birth rate has risen annually
27 since 2014 to its current average rate of 10.9 percent, higher
28 than the national average of 10.5 percent, and

29 WHEREAS, infant mortality is defined as the death of an

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30 infant before his or her first birthday, and its rate indicates
31 the overall health of a society, and

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

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

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

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

53 WHEREAS, the American College of Obstetricians and
54 Gynecologists has acknowledged the potential benefits of doula
55 support, such as the finding that regular nursing care for women
56 in labor paired with the continuous one-to-one emotional support
57 of a doula is linked with improved outcomes and delivery
58 experiences for women, and

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

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

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

67 383.29 State-certified doulas.-

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

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

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

75 (c) "State-certified doula" means a nonmedical professional
76 trained to provide doula services who has been certified by a
77 credentialing entity approved by 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 entity
86 approved by the department.

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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 training
93 and education necessary to meet the requirements of paragraph
94 (3) (a) unless its curriculum and training program have been
95 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 and
109 certification necessary to meet the requirements of subsection
110 (3).

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

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