

March 30, 2009

Dear Senator:

The undersigned organizations urge you to cosponsor the *Melanie Blocker Stokes Mom's Opportunity to Access Health, Education, Research, and Support (MOTHERS) for Postpartum Depression Act* (S. 324). This important legislation would increase much-needed research and services for postpartum depression (PPD) and psychosis.

PPD is one of the most common and frequently undiagnosed conditions associated with childbirth. In the United States alone, approximately 400,000 to 800,000 women are suffering from PPD each year. While the causes of PPD are complex and not fully understood, it is a serious condition that includes all of the symptoms of major depression.

Postpartum depression has deleterious effects on a new mother's health and well-being. Furthermore, the condition can negatively influence her infant's cognitive, social and emotional development; in some cases this impact may extend into early and middle childhood.

While postpartum depression is a widespread problem, there is not sufficient research on the causes and possible treatments for women suffering from this disorder. The *Melanie Blocker Stokes MOTHERS Act* seeks to prioritize the issue of postpartum depression by raising awareness, expanding research, and establishing grants for the operation and coordination of cost-effective services to afflicted women and their families.

We strongly urge your support for the *Melanie Blocker Stokes MOTHERS Act* to ensure that adequate steps are taken to prevent and treat postpartum depression and psychosis. Should you have any questions, please contact Krysta Jones, with the American Psychological Association at 202-336-5931 or knjones@apa.org, or Emma Palmer with the Office of Senator Robert Menendez at emma_palmer@menendez.senate.gov or 202-224-4744.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Association of Women's Health and Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
Council for Children & Families
Family Mental Health Institute
The Kristin Brooks Hope Center
March of Dimes Foundation
Mental Health America

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Hopeline Network 1-800-PPD-MOMS
National Organization for Women
New Jersey Association of Mental Health Agencies, Inc.
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Pennsylvania Perinatal Partnership
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Postpartum Support International
Psychosocial Obstetrics & Gynecology (NASPOG)
SKIPPER Initiative
Suicide Prevention Action Network-USA
Virtua Health (New Jersey)
Women of Reform Judaism