



Senator Laphonza Butler on Health and Wellness

Senator Laphonza Butler has consistently championed policies aimed at improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations across the United States. Her leadership extends across a wide array of critical issues, including mental health, maternal health, reproductive rights, and access to [necessary care for underserved communities](#). Senator Butler has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing legislative efforts that tackle disparities in health care, promote wellness, and protect the rights of all Americans to access quality health services.

Key Legislative Accomplishments

- ***NIH IMPROVE Act (S. 4147)***: Senator Butler [led this bipartisan legislation](#) designed to combat the U.S. maternal mortality crisis, which disproportionately affects women of color and advanced maternal age. The bill would support research to **reduce preventable maternal deaths and improve maternal health care before, during, and after pregnancy**.

Further, Senator Butler led a [letter](#) to the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, requesting continued support for the NIH IMPROVE Initiative in the LHHS annual appropriations bill. Following Senator Butler's letter, **the Committee committed \$73.4 million in funding for the IMPROVE Initiative**, a \$20 million increase over fiscal year 2024. This significant investment represents the impact of maternal health advocacy and is a critical step toward furthering the research necessary to prevent maternal deaths and improve care.

- ***Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act (S. 1606)***: As the only Black woman serving in the Senate, Senator Butler cosponsored this bill to call attention to every dimension of the Black maternal health crisis. The Momnibus is comprised of thirteen individual bills that would make historic investments to address every driver of maternal mortality, morbidity, and disparities in the United States. It is the **only legislation in Congress that will comprehensively address America's maternal health crisis and save moms' lives**.
- ***Pride in Mental Health Act (S. 3949)***: Senator Butler [introduced this legislation](#) to improve mental health and [crisis intervention resources for LGBTQI+ youth](#), who experience disproportionately high rates of mental health challenges. The bill would provide grant funding to support cultural competency training for caregivers, data collection on mental health outcomes among LGBTQI+ youth, school bullying prevention guidelines, development and dissemination of crisis, and other initiatives to **support the mental wellbeing of LGBTQI+ young people**.
- ***Strengthening Supports for Youth Act (S. 4811) & Prevention Services for Youth Act (S. 4812)***: Senator Butler [co-led this bipartisan legislative package](#) aimed at **addressing the**

growing youth mental health and substance use crisis. The bills would support parents and caregivers in addressing these challenges, examine the impact and scope of youth peer support services, and provide guidance on mental health and substance use prevention services under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Notable Committee Work and Advocacy

- ***Black Maternal Health Advocacy:*** During [Black Maternal Health Week](#), Senator Butler convened a roundtable of experts and leaders in the maternal health field to discuss strategies for combating the Black maternal health crisis. This event was a critical step in her ongoing efforts to elevate the conversation around maternal health disparities, build coalitions, and push for meaningful legislative change.
- ***Senate HELP Committee Hearing on Maternal Health:*** Senator Butler [provided testimony](#) during a Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee hearing to call attention to the severe shortage of minority health care professionals and the maternal health crisis. She urged the Committee to take continued action to address this crisis and advocated for legislation to eliminate the maternal health disparities faced by women of color, including the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act.
- ***Youth Mental Health Advocacy in House Caucus Hearings:*** Through her involvement in hearings held by the [House Caucus on the Commission of the Social Status of Black Men and Boys](#), Senator Butler consistently raised the issue of youth mental health, particularly focusing on the **disproportionate impact on Black youth**. She traveled to New York to participate in a [field hearing convened by the Caucus](#), and brought national attention to the mental health struggles of Black men and boys, her advocacy has included pushing for stronger prevention strategies, improved access to mental health services, and a greater focus on early intervention to ensure that young people receive the support they need at critical moments in their development.