

This week was an incredibly busy, productive district work week.

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK

April 11-17 is Black Maternal Health Week, an opportunity to uplift the voices of Black mothers, recognize the institutional racism and structural barriers that contribute to poor health outcomes for women of color, and renew our efforts to address the maternal mortality crisis. This year's theme is "Our Bodies Belong to Us: Restoring Black Autonomy and Joy!"

The United States has the highest rates of maternal mortality compared to other developed nations. Those rates are even worse for Black women, who are three times more likely to die in childbirth than white women. Unfortunately, these outcomes are not solely attributed to circumstances such as poverty and education or access to healthcare. As noted in a 2020 article in the Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics, structural racism persists today in more subtle health care policies and practices. Long-standing racial inequities and historical oppression have created serious barriers to care for Black women, which contributes to these disparate health outcomes.

As a Black mother who almost died in childbirth, addressing maternal mortality and its disparate impact on Black women has been a priority for me for a long time. As a member of the Virginia General Assembly, I addressed maternal mortality by leading passage of [The Reproductive Health Protection Act](#) and [The Pregnant Worker Fairness Act](#); expanding of Virginia's FAMIS program to cover prenatal care for all children regardless of the expectant mother's immigration status; expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months; expanding access to care by midwives and doulas; and creating a maternal mortality review team within the Virginia Department of Health.

In Congress, I am equally committed to addressing maternal mortality as a member of [The Black Maternal Health Caucus](#) and original co-sponsor of [a House resolution](#) introduced this week recognizing Black Maternal Health Week nationally.

In honor of Black Maternal Health Week, I participated in several events around the district to underscore the importance of Black maternal health and the pressing need to address the maternal mortality crisis. I toured the newly renovated Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Henrico Doctors' Hospital. I was able to reconnect with some of the nurses who cared for my daughter, Samantha, for six weeks after she was born nine weeks prematurely.



I also attended the grand opening of the Urban Baby Beginnings Maternal Health Hub in Petersburg. This new facility created in partnership with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield will provide critical wraparound services to mothers and their newborns in the Tri-Cities area. Resources like this maternal health hub are an important first step in addressing the maternal mortality crisis and closing the health care gaps too many women face.



To close out Black Maternal Health Week, I attended the Annual Birth in Color RVA Black Maternal Health Summit to discuss my work to improve Black maternal health and preserve reproductive freedom.





DISTRICT EVENTS

Touring Richmond International Airport

This week, I had the opportunity to tour Richmond International Airport (RIC) with Perry Miller, President and CEO of Capital Region Airport Commission. RIC is a major transit and trade hub in our district. Its operations account for nearly 16,000 jobs and \$2.1 billion in annual economic activity. It was wonderful to learn more about their recent updates and future plans. It was also pretty cool to visit the air control tower!



Leadership Roundtables

Throughout the week, I convened roundtable discussions with local government leaders: one with Richmond, Henrico, and Chesterfield, and one with the Tri-Cities. These roundtables allowed us to discuss local and regional needs and how my office can work with local governments to meet constituent needs and ensure the success of Virginia's Fourth Congressional District. I look forward to similar discussions throughout the district.





VSU Executive Series Discussion

I returned to Virginia State University's (VSU) this week as part of their 2023 Executive Series. I joined Quinting Lacewell and Trey Baker to discuss our journeys to politics and public service and how our work impacts Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Virginia State. My public service began in college, and it was exciting to share my experiences with the next generation of leaders.



LEGO Manufacturing Plant Groundbreaking Ceremony

Did you know that LEGO is constructing its first manufacturing facility in the U.S. right here in our district? This week, I attended the groundbreaking ceremony for this 1.7 million-square-foot precision production facility. The factory is estimated to create over 1,700 jobs in the region and serve as a major economic driver in Chesterfield. LEGO has started recruiting already! Learn more at www.legocareersvirginia.com.



LETTERS & LEGISLATION

Letter Urging Hopewell AdvanSix and Workers to Negotiate in Good Faith

Last week, 340 workers at the Hopewell-based AdvanSix chemical plant in Hopewell went on strike over wage disagreements after their contract expired. Hopewell is AdvanSix's largest manufacturing site, and one of the largest manufacturing sites

worldwide for ammonium sulfate and Nylon 6 resin. This week, I sent a letter to the President and CEO of AdvanSix, the AdvanSix Hopewell plant manager, and local labor leaders urging them to continue negotiations in good faith to reach an expeditious and fair resolution. Disruptions in operations could have serious impacts on our global supply chain, which is why it is imperative these contract negotiations continue and reach an equitable resolution for all parties involved.

IMPORTANT UPDATES

Judges' Rulings on Mifepristone

This past week, two federal judges issued conflicting rulings on mifepristone, a drug approved by the FDA over 20 years ago to terminate an early pregnancy. Despite its decades-long safety record, a Texas federal judge sought to invalidate the FDA's approval of mifepristone, which is used not only for abortion, but in miscarriage management and the treatment of uterine fibroids and endometriosis. This decision not only puts women's health at risk, but threatens to undermine the FDA's entire drug approval process by providing a pathway to challenge every FDA decision no matter how many years the drug has been on market.

Within hours of the Texas ruling, a federal judge in Washington State issued a conflicting decision ordering the FDA to keep mifepristone available in the 17 states and the District of Columbia that sued to protect the drug in those jurisdictions.

The Biden-Harris Administration immediately appealed the Texas ruling to the 5th Circuit, which stayed the decision for one week, but with new restrictions on access to mifepristone that were set to take at midnight Friday. Late Friday afternoon, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito issued a temporary stay on these restrictions to mifepristone access to allow the Court to consider the case. That means, new restrictions on access to mifepristone are blocked until at least midnight on Tuesday.

I am closely monitoring this rapidly evolving situation, and was one of 240 Congressional Democrats who signed an amicus brief to make sure mifepristone remains accessible. The lower court rulings limiting or outright banning access to mifepristone are unprecedented and recklessly undermine the FDA's authority.

Politicians should have no part in the reproductive health decisions Americans make. These are deeply personal choices that patients should make in consultation with

their health care providers. Mifepristone remains safe and effective for medication abortion, and these lower court rulings are blatantly based on ideology, not science.

Medicaid Renewal Requirements Reinstated

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Medicaid and FAMIS recipients were not required to renew their eligibility each year, even if their circumstances changed. recipients were automatically renewed into the program. However, that process ceased last month and those who wish to continue receiving Medicaid will need to renew it on an annual basis. With the end of national emergency and public health emergency declarations related to the COVID-19 pandemic in March, states resumed conducting eligibility renewals. If the local Department of Social Services has all of the information needed to complete the renewal, the process will be done automatically and an applicant will then receive a notice in the mail noting if the coverage will continue for another year.

If the renewal cannot be completed automatically, patients should receive a paper renewal form in the mail and need to take action to renew their health care coverage.

Visit CoverVA.org or CubreVirginia.org for more information on how to renew coverage.

CONGRATULATIONS

C-SPAN StudentCam 2023 Competition

Congratulations to Evan McKinney, Ayden Greer, and David Bell for being selected as winners of the C-SPAN StudentCam Competition! These three students from Elizabeth Davis Middle School in Chester won an Honorable Mention for their documentary, "Do the Twist: The Startling Truths About Opioid Abuse in America." You can watch their documentary on CSPAN's StudentCam website. There were nearly 3,000 students who participated, and C-SPAN received over 1,500 entries from 40 states, Washington, D.C., and Abu Dhabi. Prior to recess, I recognized Evan, Ayden, and David's accomplishment on the House floor, and my remarks will be officially entered into the Congressional Record. You can watch my remarks [here](#) and read a full transcript [here](#).

DISTRICT REMINDERS

Congressional Art Competition

The Fourth District Congressional Art Competition for high school students is ongoing. It is open to all high schoolers who live in Virginia's Fourth. All entries must be received by May 1, 2023.

I will be convening a panel of judges to determine the winner, and their artwork will hang in the U.S. Capitol for an entire year. The winner will also be invited to Washington D.C. to attend the awards ceremony.

For further information and detailed rules, please see here:

<https://mcclellan.house.gov/services/art-competition>.

Service Academy Day - April 29

Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) is hosting a Service Academy Day where students can come and meet with representatives of military academies, learn about these alternatives to traditional colleges, and get their questions answered. All five academies – the Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, West Point, Merchant Marine and Coast Guard Academy – will have representatives present. John Montgomery, one of my staffers and a West Point graduate, will be in attendance to answer any questions about the nomination process.

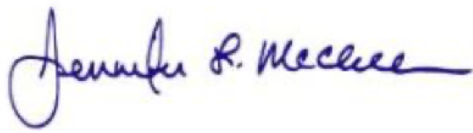
Academy Day will be on April 29th, from 10am to 1pm. It will be held at Blackwell Auditorium, Randolph-Macon College Center for the Performing Arts, 205 Henry Street, Ashland 23005. If you cannot attend, John is available to answer questions at **John.Montgomery@mail.house.gov**.

Passport Delays

As travel continues to increase, passport delays are increasing. Right now, it can take as long as four months for a passport to arrive and those delays may increase.

My office is here to help expedite these processes if your trip is fast-approaching. If you need assistance from one of my caseworkers, please visit [my website](#) to begin the process.

Sincerely,



Rep. Jennifer McClellan
Member of Congress

[Contact Me](#)

Washington DC Office

2417 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6365

Richmond District Office

110 North Robinson Street
Suite 403
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: (804) 486-1840

