

# KYGA 2024 DIGITAL TOOLKIT



**ACLU**  
Kentucky

# 2024 DIGITAL TOOLKIT

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# MATERNAL HEALTH

## OVERVIEW

**Black Kentuckians are at the forefront of the global maternal health crisis.**

The United States is the only developed country where maternal mortality rates are increasing, and Kentucky is second in the United States for poor maternal health outcomes, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Black birthing people in the Commonwealth are 3 times more likely to die during birth or after, compared to their white counterparts.

**Now that Kentucky is a forced birth state, the importance of improving these outcomes, especially for Black Kentuckians, is imperative.**

The disparity between maternal health outcomes for Black and white women is largely due to systemic racism and implicit bias in healthcare. Social determinants of health are conditions that affect the health and quality of life of people in a given environment. For Black Kentuckians, the social determinants of health — including income level, education, and socio-economic status — are not protective factors as they are for white Kentuckians when it comes to maternal and infant mortality. Racism is part and parcel of being Black in the United States, and it compromises the health of Black families.

**Therefore, applying a racial justice lens to maternal health outcomes is essential to contextualizing this urgent public health crisis.**

The ACLU of Kentucky began to raise awareness of Kentucky’s Black maternal health crisis in the 2019 general assembly, and we continue working to improve maternal health outcomes through a variety of policy proposals. Our ultimate goal is to ensure all Kentuckians have access to the full spectrum of reproductive health-care, and have the autonomy to make decisions about whether or not to start a family.

# MATERAL HEALTH

## OVERVIEW (CONT'D)

Addressing maternal health in Kentucky is a complicated endeavor, so our policy initiatives are multi-pronged but focused on four key areas:

1. addressing poverty and other socioeconomic factors that contribute to poor maternal health outcomes,
2. enhanced maternal health data collection and analysis,
3. investing in community-based solutions, like birthing centers and access to doulas,
4. and support for parents who are incarcerated.

All Kentuckians deserve birth equity. It's time to end the maternal health crisis in Kentucky.

# TALKING POINTS

## TOP LINES

- The United States has the highest maternal mortality rates among wealthy nations, and Kentucky has some of the worst birth outcomes in the US. Therefore, Kentucky is at the forefront of the global maternal mortality crisis.
- Black Kentuckians are especially at risk — they are 3x more likely to die during or after childbirth than their white counterparts.
- Pregnancy is already risky, and Kentucky's abortion bans will only exacerbate poor maternal health outcomes here, especially for Black and brown Kentuckians.
- All Kentuckians deserve birth equity. It's time to end the maternal health crisis in Kentucky.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- The United States is the only wealthy country whose maternal mortality rate has increased in recent decades. It rose 26% from 2010-14.
- Kentucky's maternal mortality rate is much higher than the national average: in Kentucky, nearly 41 out of 100,000 live births end in maternal mortality. The national average is only 17 out of 100,000 live births.
- One study from the Kentucky Cabinet of Health and Family Services showed 91 percent of maternal deaths in 2019 were preventable.
- Data shows that half of Kentuckians live in a maternal care desert. Kentucky has 120 counties, and 76 of those counties — that's more than half — don't have a single OB/GYN.

## BLACK KENTUCKIANS ARE ESPECIALLY AT RISK:

- Maternal mortality rates for people of color are 3x higher than their white peers, and 4x higher for Black Kentuckians specifically.
- These deadly trends occur regardless of where a person lives, their education, or their income, indicating the root cause is implicit bias.



# TALKING POINTS

## (CONT'D)

- Statistics show Black infant mortality rates drop when they are followed by Black doctors after birth. But only 3% of physicians in Kentucky are Black, according to the University of Kentucky College of Medicine.

## WHAT WE WANT:

- To combat these abysmal maternal health outcomes, we want legislation that:
  1. addresses poverty & other socioeconomic factors;
  2. increasing collection and analysis of enhanced maternal health data in Kentucky, with a focus on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and use this data to inform policy recommendations and track progress;
  3. invests in community solutions;
  4. and provides support for parents who are incarcerated.

## BOTTOM LINE:

- We need proactive maternal health legislation that aims to eliminate the racial disparities in maternal health outcomes for Black parents in Kentucky and ultimately makes our state safer for all birthing people.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

When posting about legislative issues, always check the ACLU of Kentucky's channels for content to share! We are @ACLUofKY on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Threads](#). Following our feed is the best way to find up-to-date information and graphics. If you want to make your own posts about this issue, here is some sample text. Add personal stories and details to make more impact!

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST: FACEBOOK

The US is the only developed country where maternal mortality rates are increasing. Kentucky is second in the United States for poor maternal health outcomes, and Black birthing people are 3 times more likely than white women to die during birth or after. Maternal health is a human right. It's time for birth equity for all Kentuckians.

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST: TWITTER/X (280 CHARACTERS MAX)

Kentuckians deserve birth equity. End the maternal health crisis in the Commonwealth.

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST: INSTAGRAM (VISUAL FIRST)

Black birthing people in Kentucky are 3 times more likely than white women to die during birth or after.

Maternal health is a human right. It's time for birth equity for all Kentuckians.

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POST: THREADS (500 CHARACTERS MAX)

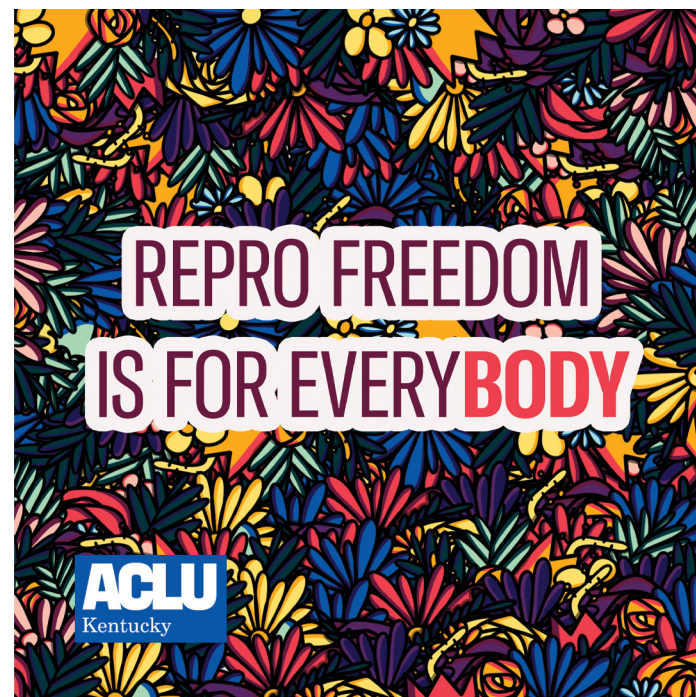
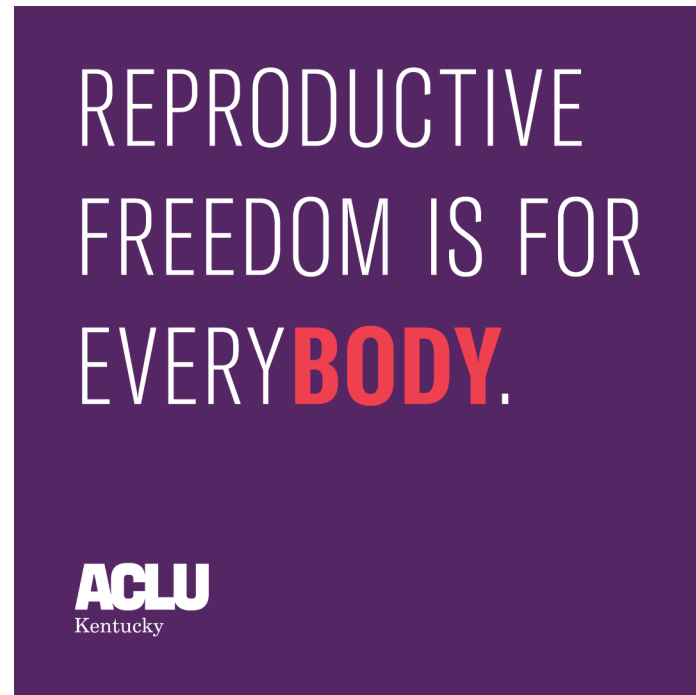
Black Kentuckians are at the forefront of the global maternal health crisis. The United States is the only developed country where maternal mortality rates are increasing.

Kentucky is second in the United States for poor maternal health outcomes, and Black birthing people are 3 times more likely than white women to die during birth or after.

Maternal health is a human right. It's time for birth equity for all Kentuckians.

# SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

To use these images, right click on them and select “save as image” or “copy image” and save the graphic to your phone or computer.



# TRADITIONAL MEDIA

## SAMPLE OP-ED - AIM FOR 500-750 WORDS

A variety of individuals write opinion articles, or op eds, for news media to share. Sometimes they are certified experts, sometimes they are everyday people who feel strongly about an issue. These brief essays can help the audience better understand a complicated issue or help them relate to something they haven’t personally experienced. These pieces can be extremely powerful and persuasive.

If you would like assistance reviewing, drafting, editing, or pitching an op-ed to newspapers, reach out to someone on the communications team. We are happy to help!

### FORMS OF PERSUASION (USE ONE OR MORE):

- a. **Personal Experience:** The writer describes an experience they have had.
- b. **Opinion:** The writer draws on the opinion of an expert—someone trained in a particular area, or someone who has relevant personal experience.
- c. **Example:** The writer provides an example that supports a larger idea or pattern.
- d. **Analogy:** The writer compares the situation to another similar situation.
- e. **Facts and Statistics:** The writer uses facts or numbers to prove their idea. Often this information comes from other sources, such as books, newspapers, or websites.
- f. **Logic:** The writer uses reasoning or logic to argue their point.
- g. **Emotion:** The writer makes an emotional appeal to the reader.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- a. **Hook:** The beginning is your chance to capture your reader’s attention. What can you start with that will compel your audience to pay attention? Perhaps an anecdote or surprising fact?
- a. **Context:** Now back up a little bit. Explain what the issue is at hand. In a few lines, provide some background and context.
- a. **Thesis:** Finally, make an argument. Tell your reader where you stand on this issue.



- **Example:** Black birthing people in Kentucky are 3 times more likely than white women to die during birth or after.

## II. FIRST BODY PARAGRAPH

- a. **Evidence #1:** Describe the central piece of evidence that supports your position.
- b. **Tie Back:** Make sure to connect this evidence back to your main argument, explaining to readers how it supports your thesis statement.
  - **Example:** Kentucky's maternal mortality rate is much higher than the national average: in Kentucky, nearly 41 out of 100,000 live births end in maternal mortality. The national average is only 17 out of 100,000 live births.

## III. SECOND BODY PARAGRAPH

- a. **Evidence #2:** Describe a second piece of evidence that supports your position. Try using a different type of persuasion (see list below).
- b. **Tie Back:** Again, make sure to connect this evidence back to your main argument, explaining to readers how it supports your thesis statement.
  - **Example:** For Black Kentuckians, the social determinants of health — including income level, education, and socio-economic status — are not protective factors as they are for white Kentuckians when it comes to maternal and infant mortality.

## IV. THIRD BODY PARAGRAPH

- a. **Counter Argument:** What would be the main argument of the opposing side?
- b. **Rebuttal:** What is your response to this argument? Why doesn't it apply to this situation/context?
  - **Example:** Racism is part and parcel of being Black in the United States, and it compromises the health of Black families.

## V. CONCLUSION

- a. **Summary:** In just a few lines, remind your reader of the main argument and evidence.
- b. **Thesis:** No need to repeat your thesis word-for-word but remind readers what you're arguing and why they should care.
- c. **Personal Comment, Call to Action, or Question:** The last few sentences of your essay will linger in your reader's mind? What do you want to leave them with?
  - **Example:** We need proactive maternal health legislation that aims to eliminate the racial disparities in maternal health outcomes for Black parents in Kentucky and ultimately makes our state safer for all birthing people.

# SCRIPTS

## CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR

- Every call counts! When you call legislators to tell them how you would like them to vote on a certain bill, they receive a physical piece of green or red paper, representing your view. Many lawmakers say they are influenced by how many green or red slips they receive. These slips are what make phone calls so effective.
- Calling the legislative message line is toll-free and only takes a few minutes. Call every day if you have the time. You don't even have to know your legislators' names but be prepared to share your address so operators can send your message to the right place.

**1-800-372-7181**

## TELEPHONE SCRIPT

- My name is [NAME] and I am your constituent. I am calling to voice my strong opposition to/support for [BILL NUMBER], or any legislation that threatens freedom of speech and expression in Kentucky. Thank you.

## EMAIL SCRIPT

- My name is [NAME] and I am your constituent. I am calling to voice my strong opposition to/support for [BILL NUMBER], or any legislation that threatens freedom of speech and expression in Kentucky. Thank you.

# TESTIMONY

## TELL YOUR STORY

Have you even wondered who the people are who sit in front of lawmakers in Frankfort to talk about issues affecting our communities? They're everyday Kentuckians who are passionate about making Kentucky a better place for their families, helping communities thrive, and moving Kentucky forward.

Anyone can testify at a committee hearing in Frankfort. Committee hearings are where bills are discussed and voted on, so they can move from their committee assignment to the full legislative chambers. Amendments and bill language can change all the way up to the full vote, and testimony can influence legislators' opinions on how our laws should read.

Everyone is passionate about something, and Kentucky's General Assembly conducts business in committee hearings with real-world implications for everyone who lives here. And while it may seem like a lot of work to prepare testimony, travel to Frankfort, and spend time in a hearing room waiting for lawmakers to hear from us, it is vital to our democracy.

Take maternal health, for example. Lawmakers need to hear from people who are impacted by our state's abysmal maternal and infant health outcomes. Lawmakers can only work with the information they have, and if the people of Kentucky don't talk about how bills will impact them, the legislature will write the laws governing our people without the complete picture.

If you're interested in testifying in Frankfort, let us know! We can help draft, edit, and polish your testimony and even attend the hearing with you (as long as we have available staff that day).

# 2024 DIGITAL TOOLKIT

Our work and our democracy depend on participation from all Kentuckians. Help protect democracy in the commonwealth and make your voice heard.

## COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

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## CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR

The Legislative Research Commission was created in 1948 as a fact-finding and service agency. The Commission operates as the administrative and research arm of the General Assembly.

At the LRC website, you can find out who your legislator is, see who has filed bills, read the draft of bills under consideration, view committee schedules and agendas, and more!

## LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

<https://www.legislature.ky.gov>

## LIVE LEGISLATIVE COVERAGE ON KET

Kentucky Educational Television — KET — is Kentucky's largest classroom, serving more than two million people each week via television, online, and mobile.

Most Kentuckians can't travel to Frankfort to testify or meet in person with legislators. KET live streams committee hearings and activity on the House and Senate floors for free, so anyone can watch and listen to the issues being discussed first-hand. Learn more at [www.ket.org](http://www.ket.org).