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Ohio Legislators' Maternal Health Efforts Recognized with Public Service Award

CLEVELAND, OH -- Three Ohio legislators will receive **The Center for Community Solutions' Award for Public Service in Honor of John A. Begala** for their efforts to address maternal health issues. Representative **Janine R. Boyd** (D-Cleveland Heights), Representative **Stephanie D. Howse** (D-Cleveland) and Minority Leader **Emilia Strong Sykes** (D-Akron) will be honored in Cleveland on **Friday, October 25**. Howse and Boyd will also participate in a **panel discussion** about the Black Maternal Health Caucus and ongoing efforts to address maternal health issues in Ohio.

The three legislators have worked tirelessly on the issues of infant and maternal mortality with the goal of empowering mothers, strengthening families and, thereby, building stronger communities across the state. Boyd and Howse are co-chairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, and issues affecting girls and women are at the forefront of Sykes' policy agenda.

"Sadly, Ohio has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation," said **John R. Corlett**, president and executive director of The Center for Community Solutions. "The statistics are staggering, with death rates among black and Hispanic mothers and babies significantly higher than among their white counterparts. This year, we honor these representatives who have worked tirelessly to ensure that Ohio's health disparities are addressed and that mothers can be more confident that they and their babies will have the opportunity to be healthy."

Tara Britton, Community Solutions' director of public policy, said, "In the U.S., women die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth at a higher rate than other industrialized nations, but understanding the issue is complex." She added, "Over the last several years, Ohio has committed to broad-based efforts and has dedicated resources to address the state's high infant mortality rate, which in 2017 was 7.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births—a total of 982 deaths."

Melissa Federman, Community Solutions' director of health programming, said, "Community Solutions has worked with policymakers to strengthen Ohio's Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Committee, a group that takes a look at maternal deaths in the state. Accessing this information will allow us to learn from past deaths with the goal of preventing future ones."



The Award for Public Service in Honor of **John Begala** was established in 2015 to honor those who have shown a great commitment to public service, especially as it relates to improving health and human services in Ohio. Begala is Community Solutions' former executive director and was a three-term member of the Ohio House of Representatives.

The awards ceremony and a panel discussion moderated by Sarah Buduson, News 5 Cleveland Investigative Reporter, will take place on **Friday, October 25, 2019**, during the morning program of the annual **Celebration of Human Services** at the **Hilton Garden Inn Cleveland Downtown**. The lunch program that follows includes a keynote address and presentation of prestigious community awards. Seating is limited; reservations are required.

*Established in 1913, **The Center for Community Solutions** is a nonprofit, non-partisan think tank, focused on solutions to health, social and economic issues. With offices in Cleveland and Columbus, Community Solutions identifies, analyzes and explains key health, social and economic data and issues, and proposes non-partisan solutions to improve the lives of Ohioans. For more information, visit www.CommunitySolutions.com and follow us on [Facebook.com/CommunitySols](https://www.facebook.com/CommunitySols) and Twitter @CommunitySols.*

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