

U.S. SENATORS KATIE BRITT, ANGELA ALSOBROOKS PUSH FOR EXPANDED WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH SCREENINGS

MARCH 2, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Katie Britt (R-Ala.) and Angela Alsobrooks (D-Md.) introduced the Bipartisan **Women's Heart Health Expansion Act** (<https://www.britt.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/WHHA.pdf>) to reauthorize and expand access to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN) program, which provides free cardiovascular risk screenings to reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured women ages 35–64.

"Americans deserve ample access to critical health services, particularly as it relates to cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death in our country. We know that women are at a higher risk of being affected by heart diseases as conditions often present differently in women. Through the Women's Heart Health Expansion Act, we have an opportunity to expand access to potentially lifesaving resources—like cardiovascular screenings—to those who need them most," **said Senator Britt.**

Introduced during American Heart Month, the program helps participants understand and reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease and benefit from early detection and treatment.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and accounts for 12 percent of total U.S. health expenditures, more than any other disease. Specifically, heart disease and stroke cost the U.S.

health care system \$216 billion annually and cause \$147 billion in lost job productivity.

“Nearly every family has been touched in some way by heart disease and stroke, as the leading cause of death for women in Maryland, Alabama, and across the country. We know heart disease is not just costing American lives, but it is also costing us financially— accounting for 12 percent of total U.S. health expenditures. We must do all we can to prevent this disease and ultimately save lives. The Women’s Heart Health Expansion Act provides critical screenings and services to help women catch and treat heart disease early,” **said Senator Alsobrooks.**

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for all Americans, but significant racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities exist in prevalence and mortality. Women in the United States experience unacceptably high rates of avoidable heart-related illness and death annually, and over half of all American women do not recognize that heart disease is the leading cause of death for women. The *Women’s Heart Health Expansion Act* is a critical step toward closing those gaps and reducing preventable deaths.

Under existing law, women must not only be eligible for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) but also be a recipient of NBCCEDP services to be referred to WISEWOMAN. This requirement unnecessarily restricts participation. The WISEWOMAN program currently operates in only a limited number of states and tribal organizations, restricting access for women at highest risk of heart disease.

The *Women’s Heart Health Expansion Act* would give CDC, states, and tribal organizations the flexibility to develop additional referral pathways and permit other health care providers to participate in the WISEWOMAN program, significantly expanding access. The bill also authorizes \$250 million for WISEWOMAN over the next five years to support nationwide expansion and meet increased demand.

You can find additional reporting on the bill **here** (<https://www.notus.org/congress/this-republican-and-democrat-are-trying-to-expand-critical-womens-health-program>) and read the full text of the bill **here** (<https://www.britt.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/WHHA.pdf>).

Senator Britt is a leading advocate for expanding affordable health care, especially for those in rural areas and those facing health disparities. She is a lead sponsor of the **Access to Breast Cancer Diagnosis (ABCD) Act** (<https://www.britt.senate.gov/news/press-releases/u-s-senators-katie-britt-jeanne-shaheen-reintroduce-access-to-breast-cancer-diagnosis-act/>), which would eliminate copays and other out-of-pocket expenses for breast cancer diagnostic tests. Additionally, she introduced the bipartisan **NIH Improve Act** (<https://www.britt.senate.gov/news/press-releases/u-s-senators-katie-britt-cory-booker-reintroduce-bipartisan-legislation-to-fund-maternal-care-and-mortality-research/>), which would ensure consistent funding for research on maternal care and mortality.

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Congresswoman Beatty Moves to Break Barriers Blocking Women from Lifesaving Heart Care

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — This week, Congresswoman Joyce Beatty [D-OH-3], in recognition of American Heart Month, reintroduced the bipartisan Women’s Heart Health Expansion Act to reauthorize and expand access to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN) program, which provides free cardiovascular risk screenings and lifestyle support services to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured women ages 35–64.

The WISEWOMAN program currently operates in only a limited number of states and tribal organizations, restricting access for women at highest risk of heart disease.

Under existing law, women must not only be eligible for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP), but also be a recipient of NBCCEDP services to be referred to WISEWOMAN. This requirement unnecessarily restricts participation. The Women’s Heart Health Expansion Act would give CDC, states, and tribal organizations the flexibility to develop additional referral pathways and permit other health care providers to participate in the WISEWOMAN program, significantly expanding access. The bill also authorizes \$250 million for WISEWOMAN over the next five years to support nationwide expansion and meet increased demand.

“Heart disease is the number one killer of women in America, yet too many women are still denied access to the screenings that could save their lives,” said Congresswoman Beatty. “That is unacceptable. The WISEWOMAN program works, but outdated restrictions are limiting who it can reach. This bill removes those barriers, expands providers, and invests \$250 million to take lifesaving prevention nationwide. Black women and other women of color face the highest risks and the worst outcomes. That is not inevitable, it is preventable. The WISEWOMAN program helps low income women know their numbers before heart disease becomes fatal. Women’s heart health must be prioritized, funded, and protected.”

This bill is cosponsored by the following Members of Congress: Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, [D-CT-3], Rep. Christopher Smith [R-NJ-4], Rep. Juan Ciscomani [R-AZ-6], Rep. Brian K. Fitzpatrick [R-PA-1], Rep. Sanford D. Bishop [D-GA-2], Rep. Michael Lawler [R-NY-17], Rep. Lois Frankel [D-FL-22], Rep. Gwen Moore [D-WI-4], Rep. Debbie Dingell [D-MI-6], Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, [D-FL-20] and Rep. Shontel Brown [D-OH-11].

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and accounts for 12 percent of total U.S. health expenditures, more than any other disease.

Women experience disproportionately high rates of preventable heart-related illness and death, and more than half of American women do not recognize heart disease as their leading health threat. Disparities worsen across race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The Women's Heart Health Expansion Act is a critical step toward closing those gaps and reducing preventable deaths.

"We know heart disease is not just costing American lives, but it is also costing us financially—accounting for 12 percent of total U.S. health expenditures. We must do all we can to prevent this disease and ultimately save lives. The Women's Heart Health Expansion Act provides critical screenings and services to help women catch and treat heart disease early," said Senator Alsobrooks.

"Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, and it disproportionately affects women of color," said Rep. DeLauro. "The Center for Disease Control's WISEWOMAN program, which I was proud to help establish in 1993, provides needed services to women who struggle with accessing healthcare – to ensure that they receive the treatment they need to prevent and overcome heart disease and lower their risk of death. I am proud to partner with Congresswoman Beatty on this lifesaving legislation that will expand access to cardiovascular disease screenings and support services, and will continue to fight to ensure all women have access to the healthcare they need to thrive."

"Historically and unnecessarily, women have experienced delayed diagnoses, ineffective treatments, and poor prognoses when it comes to cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention, management, and care. Information, awareness, and access to critical cardio-health services can and will save women's lives," said Rep. Chris Smith. "To combat the systemic gaps in health care and to improve the outcomes of women suffering from CVD, I am proud to introduce the Women's Heart Health Expansion Act alongside my fellow Congressional Coalition on Heart and Stroke Co-Chair, Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH). This critical legislation reauthorizes and expands the CDC's WISEWOMAN program, ensuring that more at-risk women can benefit from the program's free-of-charge cardiovascular health services, regardless of financial constraints or insurance coverage."

"Cardiovascular disease remains the No. 1 killer of women, and nearly 45% of women over age 20 are already living with some form of it. Raising awareness and promoting prevention is essential. This includes helping more women 'know their numbers' and expanding access to screenings to detect risk early," said Mark Schoeberl EVP of Advocacy, American Heart Association. "The Women's Heart Health Expansion Act would broaden and strengthen the WISEWOMAN program to ensure more women get preventive care and the support they need to protect their heart health. The American Heart Association is grateful to Congresswoman Beatty for her steadfast leadership in championing policies that help ensure every woman has the opportunity for a longer, healthier life."

"WomenHeart strongly supports the Women's Heart Health Expansion Act because it expands access to lifesaving prevention for women who are too often overlooked by our health care system," said Celina Gorre, CEO of WomenHeart. "By strengthening the CDC's WISEWOMAN program, this legislation helps ensure more low-income women can receive early screening, education, and follow-up care for heart disease and stroke. Prevention saves lives, and this bill is a critical step toward closing longstanding gaps in women's heart health and advancing equity in cardiovascular care."

"By strengthening and expanding the WISEWOMAN program, this legislation directly addresses longstanding gaps that have contributed to preventable disparities in outcomes. For too long, women's cardiovascular health—especially for Black women—has been overlooked in prevention and early care. This bill brings us closer to a future where women's heart health is recognized, prioritized, and protected by recognizing the urgency of investing in targeted, equitable approaches that prioritize early detection, strengthen care pathways, and improve outcomes across generations." — Anthony Fletcher, MD, FACC, President, Association of Black Cardiologists

"The Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health applauds efforts to strengthen and expand preventive cardiovascular services for women. By enhancing the WISEWOMAN program to support blood pressure and cholesterol screenings as well as appropriate referrals and follow-up care, this legislation addresses critical gaps in early detection and management of heart disease — the leading cause of death among women in the United States." — Emma Maron, Advocacy Director, Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health

This bill is endorsed by the following organizations:

The American Heart Association, The Adult Congenital Heart Association, The Association of Black Cardiologists, WomenHeart, Heart Valve Voice U.S., Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health (PACH), Healthy Women, Women's Heart Alliance, Arrhythmia Alliance, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association (HCMA), The Mended Hearts, Inc., StopAfib.org, Physician-Patient Alliance for Health & Safety, Alliance for Aging Research, and Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association (PCNA)

Click [HERE](#) for the full bill text.