



CONGRESSMAN BOBBY L. RUSH 1ST DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

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Postpartum Depression

"After six long years, October 15, 2007 marked an important step in the protracted journey for Congress to recognize postpartum depression as a national priority," said Rep. Rush on the House floor right before the vote. "By passing H.R. 20, Congress, and our nation, will finally put significant money and attention into research, screening, treatment, and education for mothers suffering and surviving this serious, debilitating, and often life-threatening disease."

What is Postpartum Depression?

- There are three degrees of postpartum depression (in order of severity): baby blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis.
- 1 in 8 women suffers from a form of Perinatal Depression known as Postpartum Depression.
- According to the National Mental Health Association, 70-80% of new mothers experience some form of a postpartum disorder immediately following the birth of a child.
- Research indicates that some form of postpartum depression affects approximately 1 in 1,000 new mothers resulting in upward of 800,000 new cases annually.
- According to Postpartum Support International, every 50 seconds a woman begins dealing with mental illness.
- Of the new postpartum cases this year, less than 15 percent of mothers will receive treatment; although with treatment over 90% of these mothers could overcome their depression.

What does the Melanie Blocker Stokes Postpartum Research and Care Act do?

Congressman Rush authored **H.R. 20, the Melanie Blocker Stokes Postpartum Depression, Research, and Care Act of 2007**, to provide immediate attention and resources towards one of the most underdiagnosed conditions after childbirth.

What does H.R. 20 do?

1) Encourages the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health,

National Institute of Mental Health further research on postpartum depression and psychosis;

2) Establishes a National Public Awareness Campaign, specifically public service announcements via television, radio, etc.

3) Includes "Depression" to the biennial reporting NIH submits to Congress;

4) Encourages the National Institutes of Health to conduct a "Longitudinal Study" on

depression and pregnancy related outcomes, including: carrying a pregnancy to term, adoption, miscarriage, and abortion;

5) Makes grants available for support services, screening and comprehensive treatment for mothers suffering from postpartum depression;

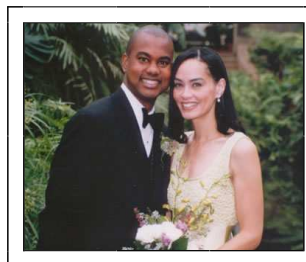
6) Authorizes \$18 million over 5 years for research and services. \$500,000 immediately in 2008.

Who is Melanie Blocker Stokes?

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- Melanie Blocker Stokes, who is the inspiration of this bill, was a 40-year-old Chicago native who committed suicide after a long, much-publicized battle with this most severe form of the mental illness.
- Melanie fell to her death from a twelve-story building on June 11, 2001. Her husband, a physician, and her tightly-knit family made numerous attempts to bring Melanie out of her depression—to no avail.

Melanie's mother, Carol Blocker, started a foundation to educate, and provide support for



Sam and Melanie Stokes

women and families suffering through postpartum depression—The Melanie Blocker Stokes Foundation.

Congress Update!!!!

A VICTORY FOR ALL MOTHERS!!!!

On October 15, 2007 the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 20, the Melanie Blocker Stokes Postpartum Research and Care Act by a vote of 382-3.

The bill is now awaiting a vote in the Senate. Call on your Senators to bring H.R. 20 to the Senate Floor for immediate consideration.

Passage of H.R. 20 will mean immediate consideration by the White House, bringing meaningful postpartum depression legislation to our nation's mothers.