

Bill to aid pregnant women heads to Biden

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The U.S. Senate passed a bill by Sen. Jacky Rosen, D-Nev., that aims to improve maternal health in rural areas that lack internet access.

The Data Mapping to Protect Moms Lives Act will locate areas where there is both a lack of access to broadband and high maternal mortality

rates to see where investment in programs such as Telehealth would be most effective for [expectant mothers](#) seeking care at home.

"With one of the highest maternal mortality rates of any developed nation, we need to take action to save lives," Rosen said in a statement. "This bipartisan legislation will direct the government to use data to identify areas where we can improve access to broadband and telemedicine to get moms the access to [health care services](#) they need."

Rosen partnered with Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., to introduce the legislation in February 2021. It passed the House on Dec. 6 and heads to President Joe Biden for a signature.

The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rates of any developed country, with more than 50,000 pregnancies facing severe complications each year, a statement from Rosen's office said.

In 2020, 861 women were identified as having died of maternal causes, compared with 2019 when 754 women died of maternal causes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nevada has the second-lowest maternal mortality rate in the country at 8.4 deaths per 100,000 births, next to Massachusetts, according to World Population Review. But despite its low maternal mortality rate, the state ranks poorly for women and children's health overall, and it has the lowest number of gynecological, [family medicine](#) and pediatric doctors per capita, according to World Population Review.

The legislation directs the FCC to gather information using its broadband health mapping tool to identify where improved access to telehealth services will be most effective, the statement from Rosen's office said. That information will be used to deploy broadband and telehealth services to those areas.

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