



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## **Governor Cuomo Signs the "Jonah Bichotte Cowan Law"**

Governor's Press Office

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Law Establishes Requirements for Treatment When An Expectant Mother Presents At a General Hospital With Concerns About Being In Pre-Term Labor

Law Named In Memory of Jonah Bichotte Cowan, Son of Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed the Jonah Bichotte Cowan Law (S8525A /A2770C) to establish requirements for treatment when an expectant mother presents at a general hospital with concerns about being in pre-term labor. The law is named in memory of Jonah Bichotte Cowan, son of Brooklyn Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte.

"We must guarantee our healthcare system looks out for all expecting mothers and provides for their safety and the safety of their newborn. It's no secret that disparities exist within the health care system and now New York is taking a real, meaningful step towards making it more fair, supportive and equitable," Governor Cuomo said. "Thanks to the work of Assemblymember Bichotte, all expectant mothers in New York will have their medical concerns taken seriously and the hospital of their choice will be prepared to admit, diagnose, and treat expectant mothers in emergency situations."

Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte said, "I thank Governor Cuomo for signing the Jonah Bichotte Cowan Law, in memory of my late son, into law today. Addressing the standard of care for expectant mothers experiencing preterm labor is a critical step towards reducing disparities in Black maternal care and Black infant care. Black infants are more than twice as likely to die from premature birth than babies of other races. Unfortunately, I have experienced that disparity firsthand when I lost my own son, Jonah, after being turned away from a hospital in an incredibly high risk situation. I also thank my colleagues in Albany, the doctors and advocates who shared their own stories and weighed in on this legislation and the many women who helped me champion this bill. Other mothers and infants, of all races and ethnicities, will now receive the standard medical care at hospitals they deserve because of this legislation in Jonah's memory."

Senator Velmanette Montgomery said, "This important legislation will ensure that women experiencing a pregnancy related emergency will be able to access the critical care that they need and requires hospitals to provide the appropriate medical attention. I thank the Governor for signing this legislation and my colleague, Assemblywoman Bichotte, for her bravery in sharing her heartbreaking experience and mobilizing us to increase medical care for pregnant women and babies in distress."

The law will require hospitals to develop their own protocols in line with already existing federal and state requirements for admitting, diagnosing, and treating expectant mothers experiencing an emergency medical condition. Information to patients about pre-term labor and premature birth will be distributed in a pamphlet given at pre-booking and at prenatal care visits. The Department of Health will develop informational materials for emergency department staff reminding them of federal and state discharge and transfer requirements.

## related legislation

### [2019-S8525](#)

- 
- Introduced
    - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - ◦ On Floor Calendar Senate
  - ◦ Passed Assembly
  - ◦ Passed Senate
  - Delivered to Governor
  - Signed By Governor
  -

[Enacts the Jonah Bichotte Cowan law relating to pre-term labor care](#)

June 08, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by [Velmanette Montgomery](#)

Do you support this bill?