



**Written Submission of Sinsi Hernández-Cancio
Vice President for Health Justice
National Partnership for Women & Families**

**"Empowered by Data: Legislation to Advance Equity and Public Health"
House Committee on Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health**

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo and Ranking Member Guthrie,

The National Partnership is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to improve the lives of women and families by achieving equity for all women. In our fiftieth year, the National Partnership continues to fight for health and economic justice. I write in support of today's important health equity legislation and urge the Committee to move these bills to drive more targeted action on addressing our nation's persistent racial, ethnic, and gender health inequities.

As a national expert on health equity and health system transformation, I also encourage the Committee to explicitly name and prioritize seeking solutions for a key driver of adverse social determinants of health – racism. The COVID pandemic highlighted not only the deep racial and ethnic inequities in health outcomes that have persisted throughout our nation's history, it also clearly demonstrated the role of socioeconomic factors in increasing or reducing the risk of disease, and that these risks are concentrated in communities of color.

Strategies to improve adverse social determinants of health that do not intentionally address the impacts of interpersonal and systemic racism on social determinants will have limited effect. We must stop using the language of social determinants of health as a proxy for grappling with racism – as too often happens in health policy conversations. We cannot afford to sidestep this issue anymore. We commend the Committee for holding this hearing today on legislation that directly addresses racism in public health such as the Anti-Racism in Public Health Act and two important pieces of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus.

I have attached a recent report I co-authored with Dr. Joia Crear-Perry, "Saving the Lives of Moms and Babies: Addressing Racism and Socioeconomic Influencers." Our [Saving the Lives of Moms and Babies series](#) was created to provide decisionmakers with a better understanding of how different socioeconomic needs, which are driven by racism and other structural inequities, affect the health of pregnant people and their infants, and to provide concrete recommendations about how to address these

needs. We encourage you to continue to advance the comprehensive policies needed so we can all thrive.

Sincerely,

Sinsi Hernández-Cancio
Vice President for Health Justice
National Partnership for Women & Families