

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
MINORITY (202) 225-5074
<https://oversight.house.gov>

MEMORANDUM

May 3, 2021

To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform

Fr: Committee Staff

Re: Hearing on “Birthing While Black: Examining America’s Black Maternal Health Crisis”

On **Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 11:00 a.m.**, the Committee will hold a hybrid hearing in **room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and on the Zoom video platform** to examine the maternal mortality and morbidity crisis experienced by Black birthing people in America.

I. BACKGROUND

Across the United States, Black birthing people are at disproportionate risk of death and adverse health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy. This public health crisis is rooted in America’s historical and ongoing legacy of structural racism and manifests itself today in racial disparities inside and outside of birth settings.

Black birthing people are three to four times more likely to experience pregnancy-related death than their white counterparts, and they experience higher rates of pregnancy complications, infant loss, and miscarriage across the board.¹ The coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately harmed Black people in the United States and worsened pre-existing health disparities.²

II. HEARING PURPOSE

The purpose of this hearing is to examine how America’s historical and ongoing structural racism against Black people is a root cause of America’s Black maternal mortality

¹ Dr. Andreea A. Creanga et al., *Pregnancy-Related Mortality in the United States, 2011–2013*, *Obstetrics and Gynecology* (Aug. 2017) (online at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28697109/#affiliation-1>); National Partnership for Women and Families, *Black Women’s Maternal Health: A Multi-Faceted Approach to Addressing Persistent and Dire Health Disparities* (Apr. 2018) (online at www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/health-care/maternity/black-womens-maternal-health-issue-brief.pdf).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health Equity Considerations & Racial & Ethnic Minority Groups* (Feb. 12, 2021) (online at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html).

crisis and to evaluate the need for comprehensive reforms and investments at the federal level to ensure the health and prosperity of Black mothers and Black families across the United States.

III. WITNESSES

Panel I

The Honorable Ayanna Pressley

Member of Congress, 7th District of Massachusetts

The Honorable Cori Bush

Member of Congress, 1st District of Missouri

The Honorable Lauren Underwood

Member of Congress, 14th District of Illinois

Co-Chair, Black Maternal Health Caucus

The Honorable Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.

Member of Congress, 12th District of North Carolina

Co-Chair, Black Maternal Health Caucus

Panel II

Tatyana Ali

Actress and Advocate

Charles Johnson

Husband of Kira Johnson and Founder of 4Kira4Moms

Veronica Gillispie, M.D., F.A.C.O.G., M.S.

Medical Director

Louisiana Perinatal Quality Collaborative

Joia Adele Crear-Perry, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.

Founder and President

National Birth Equity Collaborative

Jamila Taylor, Ph.D.

Director of Health Care Reform and Senior Fellow

The Century Foundation

Tamika Auguste, M.D.

Chair of the Obstetrician and Gynecologist Clinical Practice Council

MedStar Health

Additional witnesses to be announced.

Staff contacts: Tori Anderson, Miles Lichtman, and Max Whitcomb at (202) 225-5051.