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 disproportionally 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


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.