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The Investing in Community Healing Act of 2020

As the tragic deaths of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement have shown, our nation is grappling with the disproportionate impact of law enforcement violence on communities of color and the trauma associated with such violence. Black people are three times more likely to die from a fatal encounter with law enforcement than white people¹ and about 1 in every 1000 Black men will be killed by police officers². Research shows that police killings of unarmed Black people may contribute to 1.7 additional poor mental health days per person each year³, and traumatic experiences are associated with both behavioral health and chronic physical health conditions, especially for traumatic events that occur during childhood.

But, only one in three Black adults⁴ who need mental health care receive it due to access barriers, which include stigma associated with mental health and a lack of access to culturally competent care. Furthermore, a lack of research inhibits our ability to fully understand the health consequences of law enforcement violence on communities of color⁵.

The Investing in Community Healing Act of 2020

The Investing in Community Healing Act would connect communities of color with community-based organizations to create better access to trauma informed, culturally competent mental and behavioral health services. The bill also promotes mental health awareness and reduces stigma.

Specifically, the Investing in Community Healing Act will:

- Require HHS to conduct research on the health consequences of trauma related to violence committed by law enforcement
- Provide \$20 million in grants to community-based organizations to establish or expand access to culturally competent, trauma-informed mental and behavioral health services
- Develop an outreach and education campaign to promote awareness of mental and behavioral health and reduce stigma among communities of color

¹ Cardif Garcia and Stacey Vanek Smith, *Police Unions and Civilian Deaths* June 3, 2020. Accessed August 6, 2020 <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/03/869176943/police-unions-and-civilian-deaths>

² Osagie K. Obasogie, *Police killing black people is a pandemic, too* June 5 2020. Accessed August 17, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/police-violence-pandemic/2020/06/05/e1a2a1b0-a669-11ea-b619-3f9133bbb482_story.html

³ Jacob Bor, David Williams, Alexander Tsai, *Police killings and their spillover effects on the mental health of black Americans: a population-based, quasi-experimental study*, June 21, 2018. Accessed August 6, 2020. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31130-9/fulltext#articleInformation](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31130-9/fulltext#articleInformation)

⁴ National Alliance on Mental Health, Accessed August 6, 2020 <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Black-African-American>

⁵ American Public Health Association, *Addressing Law Enforcement Violence as a Public Health Issue*. November 13, 2018. Accessed August 6, 2020 <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2019/01/29/law-enforcement-violence>

