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**Harris, Adams Announce Legislation to Support Bias and Anti-Racism
Training in COVID-19 Response**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris (D-CA) on Wednesday announced the *COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act*, legislation to ensure health providers and other individuals involved in COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccine distribution, and response receive bias and anti-racism training. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the urgent need to address longstanding biases in our health care system. Representative Alma S. Adams (D-NC-12) will introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

COVID-19 is disproportionately infecting and killing minorities across the nation. The *COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act* builds on Sen. Harris' work to address the staggering racial and ethnic disparities that have emerged during this pandemic, including her introduction of the [*COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act*](#) and her calls for CDC to improve the collection and public dissemination of COVID-19 demographic data. According to available data, Black and Hispanic individuals across the country are three times as likely to contract COVID-19 compared to their white counterparts, and are nearly twice as likely to die from the virus. In California, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are dying at a rate nearly double that of their population proportion. Health equity for communities of color cannot happen until we address the persistent bias in our health care system.

“People of color are being infected and dying from COVID-19 at disproportionate and astounding rates,” **said Senator Harris**. “This is, in part, due to persistent bias in our health care system. We must take action to address this issue, especially as our country continues to face an unprecedented health crisis. I’m glad to partner with Representative Adams on this bill which is

a critical step toward ensuring people —especially people of color— receive comprehensive, culturally competent care.”

“The Coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated existing systemic racism in health care and health outcomes in the US revealing what many of us know: more work must be done in order to achieve a truly equitable society,” **said Congresswoman Adams**. “The COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act would help healthcare providers, state and local public health departments, and health professional schools to implement or improve bias and anti-racism training for health care professionals working on the COVID-19 response. The bill would prioritize solutions for communities with high levels of racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 rates and outcomes, including our hardest hit communities. I’m proud to join Senator Harris to dismantle systemic racism in our healthcare systems, eliminate racial health disparities, and make sure our front line heroes are equipped to fight COVID-19 from every angle in every community.”

The *COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act* would support bias and anti-racism training for individuals involved in COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccine distribution, and response.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Create a \$200 million grant program for hospitals, other health care providers, state, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, medical and other health professional training schools, and nonprofits to establish or improve bias and anti-racism training programs for health care providers treating COVID-19 patients and for individuals participating in other response efforts, like contact tracing.
- Prioritize funding for entities in communities with high racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, ICU admission, and death rates.
- Require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to collaborate with health care professionals, policy experts specializing in addressing bias and racism within the health care system, and community-based organizations to develop requirements for evidence-based, ongoing bias and anti-racism training.

Along with Harris and Adams, this legislation is co-sponsored by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Chris Coons (D-DE), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Edward Markey (D-MA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The *COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act* is supported by the American Hospital Association, American Public Health Association, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, Association of American Medical Colleges, Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations, Association of Black Cardiologists, Association of State and Territorial Health

Officials, Black Women's Health Imperative, California Hospital Association, California Medical Association, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, California Rural Indian Health Board, CLASP, Color of Change, Empowering Pacific Islander Communities, Families USA, Justice in Aging, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, National Birth Equity Collaborative, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, National Council of Urban Indian Health, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association, National Urban League, Pacific Islander COVID-19 Response Team, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Third Way, Trust for America's Health, UnidosUS, and University of California.

“Black, brown, and Native American people have been disproportionately getting sick and dying from COVID-19 because of systemic racism,” said **LaShawn Warren, Executive Vice President of Government Affairs, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights**. “One key part of addressing inequities inherent in the health care system is addressing implicit bias and racism through culturally competent training. We welcome the introduction of this legislation that will help create solutions and ensure more equitable outcomes in COVID-19 testing, treatment, health outcomes, and vaccine access for the most impacted people in our nation.”

“The COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act rightfully prioritizes the health and well-being of communities of color who are falling ill and dying from COVID-19 at shockingly high rates,” said **Dr. Jamila Taylor, Director of Health Care Reform and Senior Fellow for the Century Foundation**. “The bill authorizes dedicated funding and resources to dismantle the harmful thinking, attitudes, and behaviors that lead to delays in care and differential treatment practices. I commend Senator Harris for her bold leadership in coming out and saying what advocates and health experts have been saying for years: health equity cannot be achieved until we tackle the persistent, pervasive bias and racism that inflicts our healthcare system.”

“The coronavirus pandemic has sickened and killed Black and Latinx people at disproportionate rates,” said **Marc Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League**. “We need to ensure our health providers have the tools necessary to provide comprehensive, equitable care during these challenging times. The National Urban League is proud to support this legislation which confronts the problem at hand with a plan to improve health outcomes for our communities.”

“The Association of Black Cardiologists applauds this timely legislation,” said **Dr. Michelle Albert, MD, MPH, President, Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.** “The ABC has longstanding leadership on health disparities, and the recent focus on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on African-Americans among whom a history rooted in racism and segregation has patterned deficient educational and economic opportunities and lack of quality health care. In addition to patient related bias, it is also crucial we address racial and ethnic bias against African-American providers as portrayed in a recent powerful ABC webinar because the experiences are intertwined and ultimately affect race related health inequity.”

“NHMA supports the COVID-19 Bias and Anti-Racism Training Act because we recognize the importance of training physicians on racism and bias so they can provide better quality health care to Latinos and other vulnerable populations,” **Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, FACP, President and CEO of the National Hispanic Medical Association** said. “Thank you to Senator Harris for taking the lead.”

“Our world has spent the past few months embroiled in battle against a pandemic that is disproportionality affecting communities of color,” said **Francys Crevier, Executive Director of the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH)**. “The structures which created this country left a legacy of systemic racism that has directly affected the health and well-being of our communities. While the pandemic has only cast a cloud on our communities more recently, Black Americans and Native Americans have been battling for equity for generations. Senator Harris has been a committed leader who is breaking down the structures that have created needless disparities for Black and Brown communities. We hope Congress will act quickly to pass this important legislation to bring more resources to the families who need it most right now.”

“A longstanding and intractable problem in health care – racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes – is also present in patients diagnosed with COVID-19,” said **Carmela Coyle, President & CEO of the California Hospital Association**. “Success in battling the global pandemic means providing equitable care for all, and the bill proposed by Senator Harris is an important step toward securing the resources needed to address some of the current gaps.”

Bill text can be found [HERE](#).

A one-pager on the bill can be found [HERE](#).

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