



## **H.R. 8914 The Helping Families Heal Act** ***Representatives Cori Bush (MO-1)***

**Endorsements:** Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center, Michael OD Brown We Love Our Sons and Daughters Foundation, Civil Rights Crops, Oscar Grant Foundation, MomsRising Together, The Movement for Black Lives, Citizens Coalition for Justice Reform, Ben Crump Law, Black Lives Matter Grassroots, Black Male Initiative, One Love Global, Leaders of Kenosha, Alliance of Families for Justice, Black Leadership Action Coalition of Kentucky, Mass Liberation Arizona, Decarcerate KC, Kevin L. Cooper Foundation, Black Transcendence, No Exceptions, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement.

**Co-sponsors:** Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12), Barbara Lee (CA-13), Jamaal Bowman (NY-16), Rashida Tlaib (MI-13)

The Helping Families Heal Act is first-of-its-kind legislation to fund mental health resources to support those impacted by police violence. No government-funded programs exist to specifically provide mental health support for the victims and survivors of police brutality and the family members of those affected by police violence.

### **PROBLEM**

Every year, police in America shoot and kill more than 1,000 people, and Black people are victims at a disproportionate rate. Last year broke the record for police killings in this country – 1,055 deaths by law enforcement – and that is likely an undercount. The mental health crisis in the United States has been worsened by police violence. Studies have demonstrated that there was a strong correlation between invasive police stops and high levels of trauma.<sup>1</sup>

In Black communities, the mental health impact of police violence is staggering: Police killings of unarmed Black people are responsible for more than 50 million additional days of poor mental health per.<sup>2</sup> Heightened vigilance, or hyper-vigilance, increases depressive symptoms and furthers the mental health disparity between Black and white people.

### **SOLUTION**

The Helping Families Heal Act is first-of-its-kind legislation to fund mental health resources that will support those impacted by police violence. To date, no government-funded programs exist to provide mental health support for the victims of police brutality and the family members of those affected by police violence. Specifically, this legislation would:

- Establish the Helping Families Heal Program under Health and Human Services to implement community-based mental health programs and services to victims and families of victims who have experienced law enforcement violence.
- Establishes the Healing for Students Program under the Department of Education to increase mental health resources for students and school personnel impacted by law enforcement violence.
- Allocates \$100 million to support mental health resources and improve access mental health services for communities harmed by police violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Amanda Geller, Jeffrey Fagan, Tom Tyler & Bruce Link, Aggressive Policing and the Mental Health of Young Urban Men, 104 Am J. Pub. Health 2321 (2014).

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Bor, Atheendar Venkataramani, David Williams & Alexander Tsai, *Police Killings and Their Spillover Effects on the Mental Health of Black Americans: a Population-Based, Quasi-Experimental Study*, (Dec. 2018), available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29937193/>