

To Whom It May Concern,

Today I do not speak on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the suppressed and silenced – the Black and African American community. While to listen and decide on declaring racism as a public health crisis, I ask you to keep the following information into account. As an LSW providing prenatal education in Summit County, I have learned so much about maternal and infant mortality crisis. According to the CDC (1), Ohio is just shy of being in the top 5 states with the highest rates of infant death – the death of an infant before their first year of life. While the 2018 Ohio infant mortality rate is 6.9 (per 1000 births), in Summit county this rate is 7.06 (2). With that higher rate, in 2018 non-Hispanic African American babies in Summit County are **almost three times** more likely to die before their first birthday with a rate of 2.8 than non-Hispanic White population (2). That's a rate of 13.43 for non-Hispanic African American compared to 5.40 for non-Hispanic White (2). African Americans experience higher rates of preterm births and lower birth weights, which data shows has an impact on long term health (2). While this is just a small piece of the story of how race and racism negatively impact the health of the Black and African American population, I ask that you take this information in consideration and vote yes to declaring racism a public health threat in Ohio. Thank you for reading this testimony.



Ina Barnhart, LSW

1. Infant Mortality Rates by State. CDC.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant\\_mortality\\_rates/infant\\_mortality.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm)
2. Maternal Child Health Annual Report. Summit County Public Health.  
<https://www.scph.org/sites/default/files/editor/OEI%20202.0%20annual%20report%20FY19%20report.pdf>