

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, My name is Lisa Burnham. I am the widow of Jimmy Burnham. We were married for nearly 35 years and had five children together. I submit this statement to describe my personal experience during my husband's hospitalization in early 2021. My husband, Jimmy Burnham, was 63 years old at the time of his illness and would have turned 64 on March 26, 2021. He worked as a maintenance mechanic for approximately 42 years and was generally healthy. He rarely required medical care, took no regular prescription medications, and had never previously been hospitalized. On January 12, 2021, after a severe coughing episode at home, my husband lost consciousness. I drove him to a local emergency room, where he was diagnosed with COVID-19 and later discharged with instructions to return if his condition worsened. Over the following days, he remained active but experienced reduced appetite and increasing breathing difficulties. On January 22, 2021, I returned him to the emergency room because his breathing had become shallow and concerning. I was informed that he had severe bilateral pneumonia and required transfer to a larger hospital. He was transported to a hospital in Meridian, Mississippi, where he was admitted. Due to visitation restrictions, I was not permitted to accompany him or remain at his bedside. During his hospitalization, I communicated regularly with nurses and physicians by telephone and occasionally in person when delivering items for my husband. I repeatedly requested permission to visit him and expressed concern about his isolation. I also asked a physician whether treatments such as ivermectin or hydroxychloroquine could be considered. The physician quickly declined that request. My husband remained on oxygen support and had difficulty eating. According to recorded weights, 194 pounds on January 22, and 160 pounds at the time of his death on Feb. 6, 2021. Throughout this period, I continued to seek updates regarding his condition and requested greater access to him. On February 3, I learned that he had been transferred to regular intensive care. I was finally permitted limited visitation. During my visits, my husband was awake, coherent, and able to participate in discussions regarding his care. Physicians discussed the possibility of mechanical ventilation with him. He initially declined that option. The following day, when he reconsidered, another physician informed me that he was not considered a candidate for ventilation because of the condition of his lungs. My children, who lived in several different states, were initially denied permission to visit. As my husband's condition worsened, they were eventually allowed to communicate with him through video calls. He spoke with them and encouraged them despite his declining health. On February 6, 2021, I was present at my husband's bedside. He remained conscious and aware. Shortly afterward, he passed away. A nurse who was present described his passing as peaceful. I respectfully ask the Senate to review the experiences of patients and families affected by COVID-19 hospital policies, including visitation restrictions, communication with families, informed consent discussions, and the care provided to hospitalized patients. My purpose

in submitting this statement is to ensure that my family's experience is part of the official record.

Lisa Burnham

(Widow of Jimmy Burnham)