

R20-085

RESOLUTION

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RESOLUTION NO. R20-085

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR A DECLARATION OF RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS; PROVIDING FOR THE SUPPORT OF A VARIETY OF EFFORTS IN THE COUNTY, STATE, AND NATION TO ADDRESS RACISM AND PUBLIC HEALTH DISPARITIES DUE TO RACIAL INEQUITIES; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Upon motion by Commissioner Kemp , seconded by Commissioner Smith , the following Resolution was adopted by a vote of 5 to 0 ; Commissioner(s) _____ voting "No".

**Hillsborough County Board of County Commission
Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis.**

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever effects one directly, affects all indirectly!"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

WHEREAS, the Hillsborough County Commission has a demonstrated track record of promoting racial equity, inclusion and diversity in county government. This commitment is exemplified in Hillsborough County's Human Rights Ordinance, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race in employment, public accommodations, real estate transactions and county contracting and procurement. This commitment is further exemplified through the Commission's recent creation of an independent equity profile, highlighting racial disparities across various aspects of county residents; and

WHEREAS, Hillsborough County also has demonstrated a commitment to providing for the health of its residents by establishment and funding of a health care plan for residents of limited income and assets;

WHEREAS, these initiatives are in direct response to addressing traditional reactions to race as an identifying stumbling block for career advancement and employment opportunities in Hillsborough County and this lack of opportunity is directly linked to root causes of poverty and constricted economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis¹; and

WHEREAS, racism is a negative social system with multiple dimensions including: individual prejudices that are internalized or interpersonal; and systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks²; and

WHEREAS, "racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources"³, and Hillsborough County's collective prosperity depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin; and

WHEREAS, racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, business, employment and criminal justice; and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism itself is a social determinant of health⁴; and

WHEREAS, the US Census and the Florida Department report that In Hillsborough County, residents of color experience dramatically higher unemployment rates (Black: 10%, Hispanic: 6%, White: 4%), face a higher poverty rate as a community (Black: 25%, Hispanic: 21%, White: 10%), have lower home ownership rates (Black: 63%, Hispanic: 52%, White: 36%), significantly more likely to experience food insecurity (Black: 43%, Hispanic: 46%, White: 27%); have substantially less annual median income (Black: \$40,000, Hispanic: \$42,000, White: \$60,000)⁵; and

WHEREAS, through the leadership of the Chief Judge Ficarotta of the 13th Judicial Circuit, Hillsborough County State Attorney Andrew Warren Public Defender Julianne Holt and the Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister are committed to the elimination of racial disparities in the criminal justice system, to prioritize racial equity in our decision making processes, to acknowledge that Black communities have borne the burdens of inequitable social, environmental, economic, and criminal justice policies, practices, and investments, to understand that the legacy of these inequitable policies has caused deep disparities, harm, and mistrust, and to recognize that racial equity is realized when, and only when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes; and

WHEREAS, institutional racism and discrimination in Florida and Hillsborough County have also exacerbated a health divide between white residents and residents of color; and when people are healthy they create strong successful communities. Being healthy is about more than genetics, our health depends on the conditions of our daily life where we live, work, and play; and these conditions are not the same for everyone in Hillsborough County. Compared to White residents: Black residents are more likely to be overweight or obese and die of heart disease, cancer or stroke; twice as many Black residents die from diabetes; Hispanic residents are twice as likely to feel unsafe in their neighborhood; Black and Hispanic babies are more likely to die in their first year of life. Health comes down to whether the conditions of our daily life presents us with **OPTIONS or OBSTACLES**⁵; and

WHEREAS, black communities, working class residents, and those that suffer from disabilities, are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of the social determinants of health - health inequities stemming from economic instability, education, physical environment, living in food and broadband deserts and

¹ Garcia JJ, Shariz MZ. Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Race and Racism. Am. J. Public Health 2015; e27-30.

² Jones CP. Confronting Institutional Racism. Phylon. 2002; 50 (1/2): 7-22.

³ American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed May 2, 2020.

⁴ Flynn, A., Holmberg, S., Warren, D., and Wong, F. REWRITE the Racial Rules: Building an Inclusive American Economy. Roosevelt Institute, 2016.

⁵ The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County. (2020) Health Equality Profile.

http://hillsborough.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health-planning-statistics/health-equity/_documents/health-equity-profile-web-2020.pdf

inadequate access to health care systems. In Hillsborough County 2/3 or (67%) of our residents live too far from a healthy food source so without transportation they can't access it. Safe and affordable houses are essential for well-being, but half of the renters pay more than 30% of their income in rent and face housing challenges. People are in better health when they can get health care services, yet 1/3 or (33%) of residents with household incomes of under \$25,000 don't have health insurance. Income has a strong influence on health and longevity, and due to a history of discriminatory policies residence of color are more likely to experience economic hardships than white residents⁵; and

WHEREAS, a contemporary example of this disparity is highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the Black Community. According to a recent CDC- MMWR study, Blacks are hospitalized at a much higher rate than other groups and the death rate of Blacks in that study is twice the rate of Whites⁶; and according to the Florida Department of Health, black residents of the state are disproportionately more likely to die of Covid-19. While black residents make up 15.5 percent of the population, they represent 19.4 percent of the Floridians who have died of the virus. This disparity is even more acute when looking at younger residents. For example, Black residents make up 18 percent of Florida's population from ages 25 to 44, while representing 44 percent of deaths in this age range⁷.

WHEREAS, more than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes⁸; and

WHEREAS, a June 2020 report from the Florida Department of Health of Hillsborough County, Office of Health Equity, states that these racial health inequities “are nothing new in our nation’s history in which Black, Indigenous and other people of color have been marginalized for over 400 years⁵,” and

WHEREAS, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners stands with the residents of Hillsborough County with the declaration of racism as a public health crisis and acknowledge that all lives will matter in America only when there is recognition and affirmation that "Black Lives Matter"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED THAT THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

1. Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire county.
2. Work to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, with the Board of County Commissioners and the County Administrator and its staff leadership continuing to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across county leadership, staffing and contracting.
3. Promote equity through all policies approved by the County Commission and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development and public safety.
4. Continue to advocate locally and through the National Association of Counties for relevant policies that improve health in Black communities, and supports local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism.

⁶ CDC- Centers for Disease Control - Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: COV^oID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups

⁷ New York Times . *The Virus is Killing Young Floridians. Race is a Big Factor.* August 11, 2020.

⁸ Institute of Medicine. Unequal Treatment. <https://www.nap.edu/read/10260/chapter/2#7>. May 2, 2020; and American Public Health Association. Racism and Health. Available at: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>. Accessed May 2, 2020.

5. Further work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.
6. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live.
7. To always promote and support policies that prioritize the health of all people, especially people of color by mitigating exposure to adverse childhood experiences.
8. Promote racial equity training with the goal of reaching all county commissioners, county leadership and staff.
9. Encourage racial equity training among all community partners, grantees, vendors and contractors.
10. Identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to the Board of County Commissioners, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity; and, be it

Further resolved, that the Board of County Commissioner supports all additional efforts in Hillsborough County, the State of Florida and nationwide to address racism and public health disparities due to racial inequities; and, be it

Further resolved, that the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners calls upon the Governor, the Speaker of the Florida House, and the Florida Senate President and Attorney General to join with us to declare racism as a public health crisis and to enact equity in all policies of the State of Florida.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 16th day of September, 2020.

**STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH**

I, Pat Frank, Clerk of Circuit Court and Ex Officio Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners of Hillsborough County, Florida do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution adopted by the Board at its regular meeting of September 16, 2020 as the same appears Minute Book 532 of the Public Records of Hillsborough County, Florida.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 25th day of September, 2020.

PAT FRANK, CLERK

By: *Miguel H. Diaz*
Deputy Clerk



APPROVED BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

By: *DeBora Cromartie-Mincey*
Approved as to form and legal sufficiency