

2020 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 74

BY SENATORS CARTER, BARROW, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, FIELDS, HARRIS,
JACKSON, PETERSON, PRICE AND TARVER

HEALTH SERVICES. Urges and requests the Louisiana Department of Health to study and report on the matter of racial disparities in COVID-19 death rates in this state.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the matter of racial
3 disparities in COVID-19 death rates in this state and to report findings of the study
4 to the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana.

5 WHEREAS, the ongoing global outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel
6 coronavirus and named "coronavirus disease 2019", abbreviated as "COVID-19", has been
7 recognized as a pandemic since March 11, 2020; and

8 WHEREAS, in Louisiana and throughout the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic
9 is challenging our society in myriad, unprecedented ways; and

10 WHEREAS, as of the date of filing of this Resolution, Louisiana has registered
11 nearly two thousand seven hundred officially reported deaths from COVID-19; and

12 WHEREAS, Louisiana's per capita rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths have
13 been, and continue to rank, among the highest of all U.S. states; and

14 WHEREAS, the tremendous overall loss of life from this sudden epidemic of
15 infectious disease that Louisiana has endured is a profound tragedy; and

16 WHEREAS, worsening this tragedy is the vast racial disparity in COVID-19
17 mortality in this state and across the nation; and

18 WHEREAS, a report by APM Research Lab entitled "Color of Coronavirus" released

1 on May 20, 2020, presents evidence of an enormous discrepancy between the death rate of
2 black Americans and that of the rest of the nation's populace; the report indicates that black
3 Americans have died of COVID-19 at almost three times the rate of white Americans; and

4 WHEREAS, researchers at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center
5 at New Orleans began examining coronavirus patients at the outset of the pandemic, and
6 their findings with respect to the disease process and patient physiology published on
7 May 27, 2020, in the medical journal *The Lancet* have shed some early light on the precise
8 medical reasons for African Americans experiencing more severe complications and deaths
9 related to COVID-19; and

10 WHEREAS, while Louisiana is deeply beloved to nearly all who call her "home",
11 she suffers both from persistent social ills borne of a legacy of racial injustice and from
12 public health outcomes that are consistently among the worst in the United States; and

13 WHEREAS, the extent to which the problems of institutional racism and health
14 inequality are intertwined is becoming clearer as research on these subjects mounts; and

15 WHEREAS, as evidenced in part by the adoption of House Resolution No. 294 and
16 Senate Resolution No. 240 of the 2019 Regular Session addressing racial disparities in
17 maternal and child health outcomes and the alarming rate of mortality for African-American
18 infants and mothers in Louisiana, the legislature was aware prior to COVID-19 of threats to
19 public health that impact our state's people unequally; and

20 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 public health emergency is bringing the issue of health
21 equity into sharp focus; and

22 WHEREAS, it is vitally important for the legislature, as the policymaking branch of
23 this state's government, to address health equity in a meaningful way through public policy;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, in order to do so, members of the legislature must gain a deeper
26 understanding of the unique problems that threaten the health, well-being, and very existence
27 of black lives in Louisiana.

28 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
29 does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the matter of
30 racial disparities in COVID-19 death rates in this state.

