2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 106

BY REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL

HEALTH: Declares racism a public health crisis and urges certain actions by the governor and specific state entities

| 1 | A RESOLUTION |
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| 2 | To declare racism a public health crisis and to request the governor to urge state departments |
| 3 | to continue reviewing policies and procedures concerning racial inequality, to |
| 4 | identify and eradicate implicit and explicit racial bias, and to develop policies and |
| 5 | procedures that build racial equity. |
| 6 | WHEREAS, public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of |
| 7 | people and their communities; and |
| 8 | WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Population Health Institute |
| 9 | (UWPHI) defines racism as a social system with multiple dimensions; and |
| 10 | WHEREAS, according to the UWPHI, individual racism is internalized or |
| 11 | interpersonal, and systemic racism is institutional, or structural, and is a system of |
| 12 | structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how a |
| 13 | person looks; and |
| 14 | WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana, by definition, is facing racism individually and |
| 15 | systematically; and |
| 16 | WHEREAS, the Louisiana Public Health Institute has declared racism to be a public |
| 17 | health crisis in this state; and |
| 18 | WHEREAS, this system has placed specific individuals and communities at an unfair |
| 19 | disadvantage while other individuals and communities have been unfairly placed in more |
| 20 | advantageous positions; and |
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| 1 | WHEREAS, these unfair practices are a waste of human resources and essentially |
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| 2 | sap the strength of society as a whole; and |
| 3 | WHEREAS, a former assistant secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, |
| 4 | office of public health declared structural racism to be deadly to Hispanic and African |
| 5 | American communities; and |
| 6 | WHEREAS, Louisiana's African American residents are disproportionately impacted |
| 7 | by chronic medical conditions, which include but are not limited to high blood pressure and |
| 8 | diabetes, in comparison to the Caucasian residents of this state; and |
| 9 | WHEREAS, according to the 2020 federal decennial census, an estimated forty |
| 10 | percent of Louisiana's population is racially and ethnically diverse; and |
| 11 | WHEREAS, Louisiana's racially and ethnically diverse population is more likely to |
| 12 | be at risk for poor health outcomes due to racism; and |
| 13 | WHEREAS, New Orleans Metro News stated that seventy percent of deaths that |
| 14 | resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic were African Americans who represent only thirty- |
| 15 | two percent of the state's population, exacerbating health inequities in this state; and |
| 16 | WHEREAS, there is clear and extensive data confirming that racism negatively |
| 17 | impacts the lives of African American people in Louisiana; and |
| 18 | WHEREAS, the battle against racism is not just a statewide crisis but a nationwide |
| 19 | emergency; and |
| 20 | WHEREAS, the American Medical Association states that racism contributes to |
| 21 | health inequities throughout the United States; and |
| 22 | WHEREAS, it has been proven that the social determinants of health, which are |
| 23 | defined as the social and material factors that influence health, including but not limited to |
| 24 | employment, wages, housing, education, health care, public safety, and food access, have |
| 25 | a disproportionate impact on people of ethnically diverse backgrounds; and |
| 26 | WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association has expressed that racism is |
| 27 | a driving force of the social determinants of health due to the resulting inequalities in several |
| 28 | matters, including but not limited to housing, education, and employment; and |
| 29 | WHEREAS, combating the impacts of racism on public health requires action from |
| 30 | all levels of government and civil society. |

| 1 | THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the |
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| 2 | Legislature of Louisiana does hereby declare racism a public health crisis and does hereby |
| 3 | request the governor to urge state departments to continue reviewing policies and procedures |
| 4 | concerning racial inequality, to identify and eradicate implicit and explicit racial bias, and |
| 5 | to develop policies and procedures that build racial equity. |
| 6 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature |
| 7 | of Louisiana supports the establishment of a working group to expand the understanding of |
| 8 | structural and institutional racism. The working group should explore how racism affects |
| 9 | individual and population health and secure adequate resources to successfully address the |
| 10 | aforementioned concerns. |
| 11 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature |
| 12 | of Louisiana is committed to reviewing all portions of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of |
| 13 | 1950 with a racially equitable lens in furtherance of achieving the intent of this Resolution. |
| 14 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the |
| 15 | governor and the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health. |

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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Declares racism a public health crisis and requests the governor to urge state departments to continue reviewing policies and procedures concerning racial inequality, to identify and eradicate implicit and explicit racial bias, and to develop policies and procedures that build racial equity.