

2020 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 61

BY REPRESENTATIVES DUPLESSIS, LANDRY, FREEMAN, HUGHES, NEWELL,
AND WILLARD

HEALTH: Urges and requests the La. 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 House of Representatives 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
19 on May 20, 2020, presents evidence of an enormous discrepancy between the death rate of

1 black Americans and that of the rest of the nation's populace; the report indicates that black
2 Americans have died of COVID-19 at almost three times the rate of white Americans; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting the study called for in this
2 Resolution, the Louisiana Department of Health shall engage and solicit input from the
3 governor's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall submit
5 findings from the study called for in this Resolution to each member of the House of
6 Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana and to the David R. Poynter Legislative
7 Research Library no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2021 Regular Session
8 of the legislature.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
10 secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and to each member of the governor's
11 COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force.

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)]

HR 61 Original

2020 Regular Session

Duplessis

Urges and requests the La. Department of Health (LDH) to study the matter of racial disparities in COVID-19 death rates. Requires LDH to submit findings from the study to each member of the House of Representatives no later than 60 days prior to the convening of the 2021 R.S.