HLS 22RS-4446 ORIGINAL

2022 Regular Session

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 202

BY REPRESENTATIVES NEWELL AND WILLARD

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

A RESOLUTION

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

1	WHEREAS, these unfair practices are a waste of human resources and essentially
2	sap the strength of society as a whole; and
3	WHEREAS, a former assistant secretary of the Louisiana office of public health
4	declared structural racism to be deadly to Hispanic and African American communities; and
5	WHEREAS, Louisiana's black residents are disproportionately impacted by chronic
6	medical conditions, which include but are not limited to high blood pressure and diabetes,
7	in comparison to the white residents of this state; and
8	WHEREAS, according to the 2020 federal decennial census, an estimated forty
9	percent of Louisiana's population is racially and ethnically diverse; and
10	WHEREAS, Louisiana's racially and ethnically diverse population is more likely to
11	be at risk for poor health outcomes due to racism; and
12	WHEREAS, New Orleans Metro News stated that seventy percent of deaths that
13	resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic were African Americans who represent only thirty-
14	two percent of the state's population, exacerbating health inequities in this state; and
15	WHEREAS, there is clear and extensive data confirming that racism negatively
16	impacts the lives of people of color in Louisiana; and
17	WHEREAS, the battle against racism is not just a statewide crisis but a nationwide
18	emergency; and
19	WHEREAS, the American Medical Association states that racism contributes to
20	health inequities throughout the United States; and
21	WHEREAS, it has been proven that the social determinants of health, which are
22	defined as the social and material factors that influence health, including but not limited to
23	employment, wages, housing, education, health care, public safety, and food access, have
24	a disproportionate impact on people of ethnically diverse backgrounds; and
25	WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association has expressed that racism is
26	a driving force of the social determinants of health due to the resulting inequalities in several
27	matters, including but not limited to housing, education, and employment; and
28	WHEREAS, combating the impacts of racism on public health requires action from
29	all levels of government and civil society.

1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the 2 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby declare racism a public health crisis and request the 3 governor to urge state departments to continue reviewing policies and procedures concerning 4 racial inequality, to identify and eradicate implicit and explicit racial bias, and to develop 5 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)]

HR 202 Original

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Newell

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.