
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 54 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY SIMS, SCHLOSSBERG, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN,
ISAACSON, SANCHEZ, MADDEN, KIRKLAND, GUZMAN, HOWARD, LEE,
KENYATTA, WEBSTER, ROZZI AND WHEATLEY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing discrimination against women, people of color,
2 LGBTQ+ people, disabled people and other marginalized groups
3 as a public health issue threatening the safety of
4 Pennsylvanians.

5 WHEREAS, Discrimination is a public health issue that effects
6 millions of Americans every year and can have serious adverse
7 effects on health; and

8 WHEREAS, The experience of discrimination is a stressor that
9 can lead to the deterioration of one's physical or mental
10 health; and

11 WHEREAS, Employment discrimination, traumatic interpersonal
12 experiences, lack of access to educational and financial
13 resources and exposure to environmental hazards can increase an
14 individual's risk for negative health outcomes; and

15 WHEREAS, Black Americans are 75% more likely to live near
16 sources of industrial pollution and as a result are more likely
17 to develop conditions like asthma; and

18 WHEREAS, Individuals who are disabled are more likely to

1 experience sexual assault and aggravated assault, and are three
2 times more likely to report being denied care by a medical
3 professional; and

4 WHEREAS, Discrimination in health care by doctors, nurses and
5 other medical professionals negatively effects the health
6 outcomes of marginalized groups of individuals; and

7 WHEREAS, Black women are four times more likely to die during
8 pregnancy or childbirth than white women; and

9 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
10 Prevention, there is a 16% difference between the mortality
11 rates of black and white Americans of all ages, which can lead
12 to disparities in life expectancies of more than a decade in
13 some regions; and

14 WHEREAS, Women experience difficulties in receiving diagnoses
15 for medical conditions and are routinely told that symptoms are
16 imagined or psychosomatic; and

17 WHEREAS, While 1 in 10 women have endometriosis, it takes an
18 average of 7 years to receive a diagnosis; and

19 WHEREAS, Mental disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders,
20 including autism, ADHD and schizophrenia are often
21 underdiagnosed or incorrectly diagnosed as other conditions in
22 women; and

23 WHEREAS, Medical research has prioritized men for centuries,
24 even in studies examining medications that are only for women;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, Young transgender individuals are 3.4 times more
27 likely to be threatened or injured at school than their
28 cisgender peers, and adult transgender women are at higher risk
29 of being victims of homicide; and

30 WHEREAS, On average, a third of transgender individuals who

1 seek health care report at least one negative experience with a
2 health care provider in the prior year and 8% of lesbian, gay,
3 bisexual and queer individuals have reported that a health care
4 provider has refused to see them because of their orientation in
5 the prior year; and

6 WHEREAS, Persistent discrimination in medicine can lead to
7 avoidance of medical care from marginalized communities, leading
8 to later or missed diagnoses of treatable or preventable
9 conditions; and

10 WHEREAS, The Tuskegee experiments on 600 Black men for 40
11 years, during which more than 100 men died from syphilis that
12 was purposefully and negligently untreated and allowed to spread
13 to others, prompted decades of understandable mistrust of
14 doctors and health officials and hesitancy about medical
15 treatments and vaccinations within the Black community; and

16 WHEREAS, Disparities in health outcomes have become even more
17 pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic, where a
18 disproportionate number of Black, Latino and Native American
19 individuals have contracted and died from COVID-19; and

20 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has caused rationing of care, which leads
21 to negative outcomes and denial of care for disabled people; and

22 WHEREAS, Some states, including this Commonwealth, were
23 forced to retract initial pandemic health care guidelines due to
24 discrimination, and Pennsylvania's Crisis Standards of Care for
25 Pandemic Guidelines were changed after the United States
26 Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Civil Rights
27 received complaints and determined that these guidelines
28 discriminated against disabled people by specifically listing
29 disabilities that would lead to deprioritization in health care
30 and unfairly favored the care of people without disabilities;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Discrimination has an undeniable negative effect on
3 the physical and mental health of women, people of color, LGBTQ+
4 individuals, disabled individuals and other marginalized
5 communities; therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize that
7 discrimination is a threat to the health of members of
8 marginalized communities in this Commonwealth, and the COVID-19
9 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the health consequences of
10 discrimination and has provided further evidence of the need for
11 change.