



Legislation Text

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Resolution committing the City of Milwaukee to take actions towards achieving racial equality, and transforming the systems and institutions of racism that impact the health and well-being of the community.

This resolution commits the City, in collaboration with the Department of Employee Relations and the Equal Rights Commission, to take actions towards achieving racial equality, including, but not limited to, transforming the systems and institutions of racism that impact the health and well-being of the community. Specifically, the resolution commits the City to the following actions to address racism:

1. Assess internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of City operations.
2. Work to create an inclusive organization identifying specific activities to increase diversity across its workforce and in leadership positions.
3. Incorporate inclusion and equity into organizational practice, offer educational trainings and activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals, the health of marginalized populations, and provide tools to assist members to engage actively and authentically with communities of color.
4. Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state and federal initiatives that advance social justice, while also encouraging individual employee advocacy.
5. Encourage other local, state, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

Whereas, Milwaukee is considered one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States; and

Whereas, Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to lead, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike or run, and inadequate health education; and

Whereas, The racial segregation in Milwaukee results in wide health outcome disparities among its

different racial populations; and

Whereas, The promotion of healthy communities is directly related to the health of individuals and encourages expanding public health support networks to decrease racial disparities in health outcomes; and

Whereas, More than 100 studies have linked racism to negative health outcomes; and

Whereas, Race is a social construction with no biological basis; and

Whereas, Racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism, which is internalized or interpersonal and systematic racism, which is institutional or structural and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

Whereas, Systematic racism unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

Whereas, Racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice and an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

Whereas, African Americans comprise 38.9% of the City of Milwaukee's total population, the largest throughout Wisconsin; and

Whereas, The Wisconsin Department of Health Services determined that African Americans and Native Americans have the highest excess death rates at every stage in the life course; and

Whereas, From 2015 to 2017, the three-year rolling average infant mortality rate in the City of Milwaukee among African-American mothers was 15.4 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to their white counterparts, a rate of 5.1 deaths per 1,000 births; and

Whereas, In 2016, sexually-transmitted disease rates of chlamydia in the City of Milwaukee were 5.5 times higher among African-Americans than their white counterparts; and

Whereas, Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 states that, "Wisconsin must address persistent disparities in health outcomes and the social, economic, educational, and environmental inequities that contribute to them"; and

Whereas, The Wisconsin Public Health Association is committed to achieving health equity and convened a Racial Equity Workgroup in 2017; and

Whereas, Though there is no epidemiologic definition of "public health crisis", the health impacts of racism clearly exemplifies the definition proposed by experts: "The problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over the long-term, and it must require the adoption of large-scale solutions"; and

Whereas, The Wisconsin Public Health Association and the Milwaukee County Executive and Board of Supervisors have declared racism to be a public health crisis affecting the entire society; and

Whereas, It is the intent of Milwaukee County to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all residents in racial justice work; and

Whereas, With support from community partners, it is also the City of Milwaukee's responsibility to address racism, including seeking solutions to reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in racial justice work; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the City asserts that racism is a public health crisis affecting the entire society and supports all efforts to address public health disparities due to racial inequities throughout the City; and, be it

Further Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the City commits to the following actions to address racism:

1. Assess internal policy and procedures to ensure racial equity is a core element of City operations.
2. Work to create an inclusive organization identifying specific activities to increase diversity across its workforce and in leadership positions.
3. Incorporate inclusion and equity into organizational practice, offer educational trainings and activities to expand employees' understanding of how racism affects individuals, the health of marginalized populations, and provide tools to assist members to engage actively and authentically with communities of color.
4. Advocate for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state and federal initiatives that advance social justice, while also encouraging individual employee advocacy.
5. Encourage other local, state, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City supports all additional efforts in Milwaukee County, the State of Wisconsin and nationwide to address racism and public health disparities due to racial inequities.

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