

RESOLUTION NO. RS2020- 473

A Resolution recognizing racism as a public health crisis and declaring a commitment to enact policies that unequivocally defend minorities and aim to eradicate the effects of systemic racism affecting black people and other minorities throughout Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County.

WHEREAS, racism is inextricably linked to the foundation of America. The Black experience in America was one of chattel slavery, Black Codes, and Jim Crow. Through free and exploited Black labor the foundation of the American economy was formed, yet, Black Americans are still subjected to hardships and disadvantages in every area of life; and

WHEREAS, the Thirteen, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution were enacted to abolish slavery, which had permitted state-sanctioned violence against Blacks in the United States. However, in response to the enactment of the Thirteen, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, many states adopted Jim Crow laws following the end of this nation's Civil War, which again perpetuated the systematic mistreatment of Black Americans. Consequently, Blacks were treated as second-class citizens in the areas of housing, education, employment and criminal justice, among other inequities; and

WHEREAS, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark federal law adopted to curtail the violence and racist state-sanctioned by states against Black Americans. However, racism and its lasting effects remain today; and

WHEREAS, those lasting effects include health disparities that can be linked to the racism of hundreds of years of slavery and oppression, Jim Crow segregation, redlining, neighborhood underfunding, and less access to resources. These disparities include the increased risk of emotional and physical health problems, such as, depression, obesity, hypertension -- more than 40% of black adults have high blood pressure -- and premature death; and

WHEREAS, these racial disparities are often misattributed to bad behavior and habits but are empirically explained by scholarly research as stemming from poor living conditions, low economic status and high levels of stress directly tied to the historical and contemporary manifestations of discriminatory policies that have adversely affected Black Americans in this country since its creation. Further, one's zip code determines the quality of schools, neighborhood resources, and public services one has access to. The explanation for these health disparities is racism, not race; and

WHEREAS, the current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted these health disparities in an unmistakable way. Black patients are being hospitalized at a rate approximately five times that of White patients, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Black patients are dying at rate approximately 2.4 times higher than white patients, but Black Americans are six times more likely to be turned away from COVID-19 testing and treatment; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has also placed a spotlight on long-standing racial disparities, including instances of police violence. The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 is the latest example in a long line of deaths of Black Americans at the hands of police officers. Across the nation, others killed include Breonna Taylor, Mike Brown, Korryn Gaines, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and Philando Castile. Both Daniel Hambrick and Jocques Clemmons were killed in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, the death of George Floyd has sparked renewed scrutiny on how police functions in our society as well as how our society deals with racism and social inequities for Black Americans across the United States; and

WHEREAS, protests across the county, including several in Nashville, are seeking to uproot and abolish the systemic racism that is woven into the fabric of the United States. These racially-diverse protests are drawing record numbers, even in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic that is also disproportionately impacting communities of color. It is imperative that the Metropolitan Council goes on record as standing with those who seek justice and equality, recognizing that racism is a public health crisis caused by generations of racism and racist policies, and committing to eradicating systemic racism and the creation of racially-equitable policies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council wishes to stand in support of the acknowledgement that racism is a public health crisis, which is responsible for the egregious disparities in health, education, and economic outcomes for Black people and other people of color in the United States.

Section 2. That the Metropolitan Council commits to working with its citizens to enact policies that eradicate systemic racism by investing in predominately Black neighborhoods and other communities of color to create equitable health, educational, and economic opportunities for Black people and other people of color throughout Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee.

Section 3. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

SPONSORED BY:



Brandon Taylor



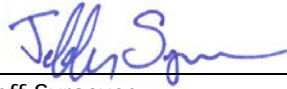
Sharon Hurt



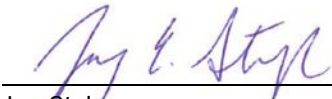
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12:01 pm, Jul 28 2020

FILED METROPOLITAN CLERK

METROPOLITAN COUNTY COUNCIL

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Introduced AUG 04 2020

Amended _____

Adopted AUG 04 2020

Approved AUG 05 2020

By 
Metropolitan Mayor
