SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 27

Senators Bullock, Geiss, Ananich, Hertel, Santana, Wojno, Alexander, McCann, Brinks, Moss, Irwin, McMorrow, Polehanki, Bayer, Chang, Zorn and Hollier offered the following concurrent resolution:

A concurrent resolution to declare that racism is a public health crisis in the state of Michigan and commit the Legislature to action and collaboration with the Governor to promote racial equity and justice throughout the entire state of Michigan.

Whereas, Racism is rooted in the foundations of the United States. From the time chattel slavery began in the 1600s, to the Jim Crow era, to the mass incarceration of Black citizens, racism has remained an endemic presence in American society. While the manifestation of prejudice has undergone structural changes over time, the underlying problem remains. People of color have been disadvantaged and subjected to hardships and outright brutality since the founding of our nation; and
Whereas, The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the stark racial injustices that are still present in American society. Black patients across the nation are dying in larger-than-expected, record numbers, and COVID-19 is killing Black people at 2.4 times the rate of White people. In Michigan, Black people make up less than 14 percent of the population, yet they account for 40 percent of the COVID-19 deaths in the state; and

Whereas, Black people are disproportionately suffering in part due to long-standing, unaddressed health disparities, as well as systematic racism and other socioeconomic inequities. The Black community experiences disproportionately higher rates of homelessness, incarceration, and economic hardships, which exacerbate existing health issues; and

Whereas, Michigan’s racist history has contributed to the current health disparities that Black Michigan residents experience. Discriminatory lending practices in the 20th century, known as redlining, created segregated communities in Michigan. Black communities were limited to areas with restricted access to healthy foods, clean water, and other essential resources, leading to a variety of other health issues, including reduced life expectancy, higher rates of infant mortality, and higher rates of lead poisoning. In addition, Michigan institutions have demonstrated a disregard for Black lives, as was made evident by the Flint water crisis; and

Whereas, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist and Michigan’s Chief Medical Executive Dr. Joneigh Khaldun have all publicly condemned the racism embedded in every fabric of our culture, voiced support for peaceful protests to bring issues of racism and bigotry to the forefront, and recognized...
that racial inequities are directly linked to poor health outcomes in Black Americans; and

Whereas, Governor Whitmer signed Executive Order 2020-55 on April 20, 2020, which established the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities to examine factors that contribute to racial inequities and make policy recommendations on how to meaningfully address them; and

Whereas, The privileges that other Americans experience inhibit them from fully understanding how racism impacts citizens of color throughout the country, including here in Michigan. Tasks such as driving, walking, and simply breathing should not result in citizens of color living in constant fear of being harassed, arrested, shot, or killed as a result of racist policing; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we declare that racism is a public health crisis in the state of Michigan and we commit to working collaboratively with the Governor and every sector of society to develop an ongoing strategy to address, fund, and support solutions that strategically reduce the long-term impact that racism has on the quality of life and health for citizens of color in the state of Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Chief Medical Executive for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.