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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ASSERTING THAT RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND URGING THE STATE TO COMMIT TO RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING THE RESULTING INEQUITIES.

1           WHEREAS, public health is defined by the World Health  
2 Organization as "the art and science of preventing disease,  
3 prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized  
4 efforts of society"; and

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6           WHEREAS, racism is a social system with many dimensions  
7 that act on systemic, institutional, and interpersonal levels;  
8 and

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10          WHEREAS, structural racism has resulted in race functioning  
11 as a social determinant of health, with persistent racial  
12 disparities in areas such as health care, criminal justice,  
13 housing, education, employment, worker protections, climate,  
14 food access, and technology; and

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16          WHEREAS, systemic racism resulting from the inherent biases  
17 and prejudices within social and political organizations,  
18 groups, and institutions continues to create barriers to success  
19 for people of color; and

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21          WHEREAS, racism intersects with other forms of prejudice  
22 and oppression that increase adverse outcomes, including  
23 discrimination based on immigration status, gender and sexual  
24 identity, and mental and physical abilities; and

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26          WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic  
27 has revealed, reaffirmed, and cast in sharp relief the exigent  
28 nature of these pre-existing inequities caused by systemic  
29 racism; and

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31          WHEREAS, the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM)  
32 reported in May of 2020 that the highest rates of positive



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1 COVID-19 cases in several states, including Hawaii, were among  
2 native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) groups; and  
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4 WHEREAS, according to Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula, professor and  
5 Chairperson of JABSOM's Department of Native Hawaiian Health,  
6 the higher risk of infection among NHPI communities is linked to  
7 pre-existing and underlying inequities in the social  
8 determinants of public health across racial and ethnic groups  
9 that are ubiquitous in the United States; now, therefore,  
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11 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
12 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
13 of 2021, the Senate concurring, that this body asserts that  
14 racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire State and  
15 that the State is urged to commit to:  
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- 17 (1) Eliminating racial disparities in the criminal justice  
18 system;
- 19 (2) Prioritizing racial equity in decision making  
20 processes;
- 21 (3) Acknowledging that communities of color have borne the  
22 greatest burdens of inequitable social, environmental,  
23 technological, economic, and criminal justice  
24 policies, practices, and investments;
- 25 (4) Understanding that the legacy of inequitable policies  
26 has caused deep disparities, harm, and mistrust; and  
27
- 28 (5) Recognizing that racial equity is realized only when  
29 race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes;  
30 and  
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is urged to commit to  
33 engage as partners with communities and residents most impacted  
34 by systemic racism and to identify and implement solutions; and  
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is urged to  
37 prioritize diversity in board membership, centering voices of  
38 people of color when addressing issues of racism, and holding  
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1 one another accountable to address implicit biases of all kinds;  
2 and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is urged to promote  
5 equity through all policies approved by the Legislature and  
6 enhance educational efforts throughout the state system aimed at  
7 understanding, addressing, and dismantling racism and how it  
8 affects the delivery of human and social services, economic  
9 development, and public safety; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
12 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director  
13 of the Department of Health, and Chairperson of the John A.  
14 Burns School of Medicine Department of Native Hawaiian Health.

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OFFERED BY: *Dele A. Kailahi*

MAR 11 2021

