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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DECLARING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS.

1           WHEREAS, the World Health Organization identifies the right  
2 to health, defined as the enjoyment of the highest attainable  
3 standard of health, as a fundamental human right, which must be  
4 enjoyed without discrimination on the grounds of race, age,  
5 ethnicity, or any other status; and  
6

7           WHEREAS, racism's influence on public health has been  
8 recognized by the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease  
9 Control and Prevention, Department of Health, Judiciary, Hawai'i  
10 State Commission on the Status of Women, Papa Ola Lōkahi, 'Ahahui  
11 o Nā Kauka, American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i, and many  
12 others; and  
13

14           WHEREAS, Hawai'i's historical trauma caused by racism  
15 demonstrates that it is not immune to nor void of the existence  
16 and insidious ways in which racism operationalizes at  
17 institutional, systemic, and personal levels; and  
18

19           WHEREAS, Native Hawaiians are the native people of Hawai'i  
20 and maintained a once thriving population estimated to be over  
21 one million inhabitants, whose land and resource management  
22 practices allowed them to live harmoniously with their  
23 environment; and  
24

25           WHEREAS, the arrival of westerners caused a shift in this  
26 balance, resulting in colonization and the erosion and eventual  
27 loss of Native Hawaiian governance over Hawai'i's lands and  
28 resources; and  
29

30           WHEREAS, the decimation of the Native Hawaiian population,  
31 the dispossession and disconnection of Native Hawaiians from



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1 their lands, and the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom were  
2 motivated by foreign colonial motives that resulted in further  
3 historical injustices, systemic inequities, and subsequent  
4 racist policies favoring foreign colonizers that continue to  
5 impact the Native Hawaiian community; and  
6

7 WHEREAS, a series of epidemics from foreign diseases in  
8 particular contributed significantly to the historic decline of  
9 the Native Hawaiian population and the generational trauma that  
10 Native Hawaiians are still healing from today; and  
11

12 WHEREAS, the trauma caused by colonizers exacerbated  
13 historical injustices, perpetuated by western individuals and  
14 interests, led to the oppression of Native Hawaiian culture and  
15 people, the consequences of which Native Hawaiians continue to  
16 experience today; and  
17

18 WHEREAS, the perpetuation of laws, policies, and political  
19 structures that have arisen from, and the continued failure to  
20 acknowledge and address, these historical injustices have  
21 resulted in the continued oppression of Native Hawaiians as well  
22 as other Pacific Islanders in Hawai'i; and  
23

24 WHEREAS, racism was the driving force of the unjust and  
25 wrongful accusation, trial, and murder of Joseph Kahahawai, Jr.;  
26 and  
27

28 WHEREAS, Hawai'i is the most multi-racial population in the  
29 United States and yet Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders  
30 experience the poorest health outcomes due to systemic racism;  
31 and  
32

33 WHEREAS, Native Hawaiians continue to be overrepresented in  
34 state prisons and jails, and recent data by the Office of  
35 Hawaiian Education substantiates the school-to-prison pipeline  
36 that disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiian youth; and  
37

38 WHEREAS, systemic racism is a social determinant of health,  
39 with persistent racial disparities in criminal justice, housing,  
40 education, health care, economic opportunities, and employment;  
41 and



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1 WHEREAS, racism manifests in distinct ways across other  
2 social dimensions, including gender identity, sexual  
3 orientation, socioeconomic class, disability, immigration  
4 status, and age, and collectively reinforces the racial  
5 hierarchy throughout these intersections, which weakens the  
6 strength of our entire humanity; and  
7

8 WHEREAS, racism is a threat to public health and safety,  
9 and is a paramount social determinant of health, shaping access  
10 to the resources that create opportunities for health, including  
11 public safety, housing, education, and employment, and is a  
12 persistent barrier to health equity for all of Hawai'i; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, there is also a long line of strong, Hawai'i  
15 matriarchal trailblazers--Queen Lili'uokalani, Princess Bernice  
16 Pauahi Bishop, Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani, and the Honorable  
17 Patsy Mink--who each stood for justice for all of Hawai'i and who  
18 are upheld as role models and leaders we should strive to  
19 emulate; and  
20

21 WHEREAS, in recognition of the historical injustices and  
22 ongoing inequities faced by Native Hawaiians, the Hawai'i State  
23 Constitution and Hawai'i Revised Statutes memorializes provisions  
24 that aim at restoring justice for Native Hawaiians; and  
25

26 WHEREAS, section 226-20, Hawai'i Revised Statutes,  
27 acknowledges the social determinants of health that influence  
28 Native Hawaiian health, and expresses the State of Hawai'i's  
29 commitment to reducing these health disparities for Native  
30 Hawaiians and other groups through a social determinants of  
31 health approach; and  
32

33 WHEREAS, to best accomplish the Hawai'i State Planning Act's  
34 objective of the "elimination of health disparities by  
35 identifying and addressing social determinants of health",  
36 institutionalized racism and racist policies must be dismantled;  
37 and  
38

39 WHEREAS, the recent COVID-19 pandemic reopened the wound of  
40 Hawai'i's historically shared trauma founded on racism and



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1 discrimination, like the forced relocation of those with leprosy  
2 to Kalaupapa; and

3  
4 WHEREAS, the recovery and resilience of the Native  
5 Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and indigenous communities are  
6 dependent on our collective efforts to not only recognize the  
7 need for equity and justice, but to also acknowledge the effect  
8 of racism; now, therefore,

9  
10 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
11 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session  
12 of 2021, the Senate concurring, that this body declares racism  
13 as a public health crisis; and

14  
15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body recognizes the  
16 importance of educational opportunities, training, and continued  
17 learning aimed at understanding and addressing systemic racism,  
18 and of the need for our collective effort to dismantle all forms  
19 of racism at all levels and its impacts on the delivery and  
20 implementation of human and social services, economic  
21 development, health care, and public safety; and

22  
23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body recognizes the need  
24 to adopt a Hawai'i-based, culturally-based, health justice  
25 framework that will further combat the continuation of racism  
26 with policymaking while also promoting racial equity; and

27  
28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body urges the Governor to  
29 also declare racism a public health crisis and direct the  
30 departments to assess how systemic racism exists in the  
31 departments' policies, programs, and services, and to take all  
32 steps necessary to address racism in promoting racial equity;  
33 and

34  
35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
36 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and  
37 directors or chairs of all departments.

38  
39  
40 OFFERED BY:



MAR 11 2021

