



A Resolution addressing Reproductive Justice

Committee: Health

Resolution: HEA-20-08

1. **WHEREAS**, the absence of reproductive dignity and safety were key to definitions and
2. mechanisms of degradation, enslavement and white supremacy.
3. **WHEREAS**, Enslaved women did not have sexual, relational and maternal rights. Such
4. as the right to choose their sexual partners, the right to enter legal marriage, to protect and
5. mother their children or the right to even know their children.
6. **WHEREAS**, After slavery ended and the babies of African Americans no longer
7. increased the wealth of slave owning whites, laws encouraged the sterilization of many
8. women, frequently poor women of color.
9. **WHEREAS**, Suppressing fertility was believed by the US Government to temporarily or
10. permanently diminish poverty and could stabilize a society, ultimately to protect the
11. interests of the elite.
12. **WHEREAS**, The government has also created a variety of laws over time that have
13. separated children from their mothers. These have given the state both the power to
14. decide what constitutes a good mother and the capacity to act against the motherhood of
15. women defined as falling short of that standard dependent on racial and class biases.
16. **WHEREAS**, In North Carolina analysis portrays that between 1950-1966 African
17. American women were sterilized at more than three times the rate of white women. Also

18. African American women were sterilized more than twelve times the rate of white men
19. who were the primary targets at the conception of sterilization.

20. **WHEREAS**, This high rate of sterilization amongst African American women derives
21. from the idea that women of color are not “fit” or responsible enough to be a parent.

22. **WHEREAS**, Between the years of 1997 and 2010 1,400 women underwent forced
23. sterilization procedures within California prisons.

24. **WHEREAS**, In 1964 a 20-year old African American woman, whose name was redacted
25. from the records, was sterilized due to the North Carolina Eugenics Board report that she
26. had a low IQ score of 62 and exhibited aggressive and sexual behavior ultimately
27. deeming her unfit as a mother.

28. **WHEREAS**, More than three quarters of women who did self-abortions ran into serious
29. infections or death. These women mostly lived in rural parts of the country of the poorest
30. urban areas.

31. **WHEREAS**, The development of federal programs to aid low-class mothers ultimately
32. promoted racial exclusion, racial difference and racial separation while primarily
33. addressing the needs of white mothers.

34. **WHEREAS**, States often gave minority women the smallest benefits and while resisted
35. making cash payments, claiming women of color are too irresponsible to handle cash.

36. **WHEREAS**, The National Welfare Rights Organization insisted on their right, despite
37. poverty, to be mothers and maintain their status as qualified citizens deserving social
38. provisions.

39. **WHEREAS**, SisterSong defines Reproductive Justice as the human right to maintain
40. personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we

41. have in safe and sustainable communities.

42. **WHEREAS**, Reproductive Justice not only focuses on choice but primarily gaining

43. access to the fundamental assistance in raising a child or making the choice to not have a

44. child.

45. **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that NOBEL Women encourages and supports

46. assistance for maternal health and wellness programs in low-income communities.

47. **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that NOBEL Women supports Reproductive

48. Justice and rights for women throughout the United States.

Introduced by the Honorable Raumesh Akbari

Tennessee General Assembly