

BROWN, BOOKER, HARRIS INTRODUCE SENATE RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Recognizing Role of Race in Health Disparities Especially Important during COVID-19 Pandemic

WASHINGTON, D.C. – July 22, 2020, U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Kamala Harris (D-CA) introduced a Senate Resolution to declare racism a public health crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has been the great revealer – underscoring the racial disparities that continue to pervade public health as a direct result of systemic racism. Barriers to quality health care access, housing, jobs, wages and so much else contribute to stark health disparities for communities of color. This virus has proven especially lethal for those communities – the infection, hospitalization, and mortality rates are disproportionately high among Black, Latino, and AI/AN populations. Data show 22 percent of COVID-19 patients are Black, when Black people make up 13 percent of the entire population, and 33 percent of COVID-19 patients are Latino, when they make up just 18 percent of the entire population. Representative Jahana Hayes (D-CT-5) will introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

“We will not make progress until we acknowledge and address all of the ways that centuries of racism and oppression have harmed Black and brown Americans,” said Senator Brown. **“This resolution is an important step toward recognizing the racial disparities in healthcare that have existed for far too long while also outlining concrete action we can take now to help reverse them. Though this resolution is not a solution in and of itself, it will help to lay the foundation for change that is continually subverted by and for the status quo. I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing this important resolution.”**

“For too long, communities of color have suffered disproportionately from countless illnesses and conditions, from maternal and infant mortality to now COVID-19,” said Senator Booker. **“These health inequities are the direct result of centuries of racist policy that have disenfranchised, disinvested, and disrespected Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color. Declaring racism a public health crisis is a small, but necessary, step toward addressing the deep-rooted and systemic inequities that have created and continue to exacerbate unfair and unjust health outcomes and enabling us to finally move forward in creating a truly equitable health care system for all.”**

“COVID-19 has caused a public health crisis that is disproportionately impacting people of color. In fact, available data shows that African American and Latinx people are three times as likely to get sick with the virus; and nearly twice as likely to die,” said Senator Harris. **“This**

is, in part, due to long-standing barriers to care that are rooted in generations of systemic racism. This resolution affirms Congress' commitment to fully acknowledge and address racial inequities and injustice across all sectors."

The resolution acknowledges the history of racism and discrimination within health care and the systemic barriers that people of color continue to face when seeking care. The resolution also highlights the effects of systemic racism on the health and wellness of communities of color, resulting in shorter life expectancy, worsened health outcomes, and enhanced exposure to harmful or dangerous environments. This resolution encourages concrete action to address health disparities and inequity across all sectors in society.

Along with Brown, Booker, and Harris, the resolution was cosponsored by Sens. Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Tom Carper (D-DE), Edward Markey (D-MA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Tina Smith (D-MN), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Patty Murray (D-WA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Robert Casey (D-PA), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jack Reed (D-RI), and Angus King (I-ME).

Full text of the resolution is available [HERE](#).

Supporting Organizations Include:

AAPCHO, ABC Management, ACCESS, Access Living, ACTION OHIO Coalition for Battered Women, Adoption Network Cleveland: The Ohio Family Connection, Advocates for Youth, Advocating Opportunity, African Communities Together, Akron Children's Hospital, Alliance for Aging Research, Alliance for Justice, Alliance for the Great Lakes, Alliance of Baptists, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College Nurse Mid-wives, American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG), American Forests, American Muslim Health Professionals, American Public Health Association (APHA), American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), America's Essential Hospitals, Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, Association for Women in Psychology, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network, Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Black Women's Health Imperative, Center for American Progress, Center for Closing the Health Gap in Greater Cincinnati, Center for Earth, Energy, and Democracy (CEED), Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, Center for Responsible Lending, Charlottesville NOW (National Organization for Women), Cincinnati Children's Medical Center, Cincinnati Museum Center, City of Youngstown, Clean Power Lake County, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, Columbus City Council, Community Catalyst, Connecting Kids to Meals, Dayton Children's Hospital, Dayton YWCA, Dix & Eaton Inc., Down Home North Carolina (DHNC), Environmental League of Massachusetts, Equality Toledo, Faithworks Inc., Friends Committee on National Legislation, FSIC American Innovation and Opportunity Fund, Futures Without Violence, Georgia Conservation Voters, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, Greater Cleveland Food Bank,

Haitian Bridge Alliance, Hamilton County Commissioner – Denise Driehaus (OH), Hamilton County Commissioner – Stephanie Dumas (OH), Hamilton County Commissioner – Victoria Parks (OH), Health Equity Collaborative, Hispanic Federation, HIV Medicine Association, Hometown Action (Alabama), Howard University, Human Impact Partners, Human Rights Watch, Indivisible, Intercultural Development Research Association, Jane Addams Senior Caucus, Jewish Community Relations Council, Lambda Legal, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, League of Conservation Voters, League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area in Virginia, LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, Lucas County Children’s Services Board of Trustees, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Maine Conservation Voters, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, Maryland National Organization for Women, Mayor John Cranley – City of Cincinnati (OH), Mayor Thaddeus Hoffmeister – City of Wyoming (OH), MidTown Cleveland, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners (OH), Montgomery County Recorder – Brandon McClain (OH), Montgomery County Treasurer, Russ Joseph (OH), Morehouse School of Medicine, NAACP Toledo Unit 3204, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, National Association of Social Workers, National Birth Equity Collaborative, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Employment Law Project, National Health Law Program, National Immigrant Center, National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund, National Medical Association, National Organization for Women, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, National Urban League, National Women’s Political Caucus, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, New Hampshire Youth Movement (NHYM), New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, New Jersey Organizing Project (NJOP), Next100, Not Dead Yet, Ohio Urban Resource Systems (OURS), Ohio YWCA, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Partnership for Innovation and Empowerment, People’s Action, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Poligon Education Fund, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), Protect our Care Illinois, Race Equity Project, Restaurant Opportunities Centers, Rights and Democracy New Hampshire (RAD-NH), Rights and Democracy Vermont (RAD-VT), Service employees International Union, Shriver Center on Poverty Law, Signature Health, Inc., Sisters of Charity Health System in Canton, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SPLC Action Fund, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center in Cleveland, Stand Up America, Summers County Huddle, Take Action Minnesota (TAMN), The Center for Health Affairs, The City of Cincinnati Board of Health, The City of Cincinnati Department of Health, The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland, The Fair Housing Resource Center, The Orlean Company, The University of Cincinnati, The Women’s Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Toledo Lucas county Library, Towards Employment, Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership, Trust for America’s Health, Trustees for Alaska, UnidosUS, Union for Reform Judaism, Union of Concerned Scientists, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, United Church of Christ – National Setting, United Negro College Fund, United Parents Against Lead & Other Environmental Hazards, United Vision for Idaho (UVI), United Way of Central Ohio, United Way of Erie County, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, United Way of Greater Cleveland, United Way of Greater Stark County, United Way of Summit and Media, United Way of Youngstown and Mahoning Valley, University Hospitals, Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative, Volunteer Lawyers for Justice, Washington Community Action Network (WCAN), We Act, West Virginia Citizen Action Group (WV CAG), Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, Youngstown City Health

District, Youngstown Local Office on Minority Health, Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, YWCA Mahoning Valley, YWCA of NW Ohio.