Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	To declare racism as a public health crisis in the city of Richmond.		
Sponsors:	Vice President Robertson, Michael Jones, Andreas Addison, Katherine Jordan, Stephanie Lynch, Ann-Frances Lambert, Cynthia Newbille, Kristen Nye		
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/26/2021	1	City Council	adopted	Pass
7/8/2021	1	Education and Human Services Standing Committee	recommended for approval	
6/28/2021	1	City Council	introduced and referred	

To declare racism as a public health crisis in the city of Richmond.

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, “race” is a social construct with no basis in human biology and was created to uphold a system of oppression for Black and Brown People; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the Black experience of racism is rooted in the foundation of America, beginning with chattel slavery in 1619 through the Jim Crow era of the twentieth century resulting in the denial of opportunity and related hardships and disadvantages for people of color in every area of life; and

WHEREAS, Council believes in the sanctity, dignity, and worth of all human beings; and

WHEREAS, Council believes a social system based on racism and inequity is heinous, affecting multiple levels of human existence because such a system is internalized and interpersonal; systemic, institutional and structural; and unfairly assigns opportunity and worth based on the color of person’s skin; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, it has been shown that racism is linked to more negative health outcomes for Black people, most recently in the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but more commonly in the high rates of infant mortality, maternal death, breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, hypertension,

diabetes, and mental health crises in Black communities; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, the current impact of racism on the quality of life for Black people can be seen, not only in the health and environmental issues of limited access to healthy food and water, and higher rates of lead poisoning, leading to reduced life expectancy among Black people, but also in the form of discriminatory lending practices known as “redlining” that limited access to healthy residential areas; and

WHEREAS, upon the information and belief of the Council, the City of Richmond is engaging directly in a publicly supported racism reform agenda for public safety with a goal of building trust between all citizens and law enforcement officers through the creation of the Task Force on the Establishment of a Civilian Review Board, which is charged to develop recommendations for a civilian review board to improve accountability and transparency in policing; and

WHEREAS, the Council is committed to dismantling those systemic structures that undermine the health of Black people; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of the Council, studies show the disproportionate challenges facing the nation and local communities because of racism and inequities in the areas of healthcare, education, and economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interests of the City of Richmond that the Council declare racism as a public health crisis in the city of Richmond;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby declares that racism is a public health crisis in the city of Richmond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council, to address the public health crisis of racism, proposes to do the following, to the extent permitted by law:

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1. Declare that racism is a public health crisis affecting the entire country.

2. Enact such legislation and implement such policies, as may be necessary, to ensure that the City is an equity and anti-racist organization.

3. Work with the City's Administration to identify specific activities to further enhance diversity and to ensure that anti-racism principles are implemented in all agencies and departments of the City, especially as those principles relate to the City's procurement and hiring practices.

4. Promote equity through all policies approved by the Council and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing, and dismantling racism and how racism affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development, and public safety.

5. Continue to work with various organizations in efforts to develop policies designed to improve the health of all communities within the city of Richmond and implemented to support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that dismantle systemic racism.

6. Strengthen alliances and partnerships with organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

7. Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with underserved communities.

8. Continue on-going racial equity training with the goal of providing such training for all City officials and employees.

9. Encourage all community partners, grantees, vendors and contractors of the City to participate in racial equity training.

10. Acknowledge and adopt the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination as an international day of remembrance for victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

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That the Council supports all additional efforts in the City of Richmond, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and nationwide to address public health disparities due to racism.