County Council of Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Resolution No. R2020-0122

Sponsored by: **County Executive Budish and Councilmembers Brown, Conwell, Jones, Stephens, Brady, Miller, Simon, Gallagher and Tuma**	**A Resolution** declaring racism a public health crisis in Cuyahoga County, and declaring the necessity that this Resolution become immediately effective.

WHEREAS, the Charter of Cuyahoga County declares that the people of Cuyahoga County desire "an improved focus on equity for all our communities and citizens"; and

WHEREAS, almost all of the four hundred years of history for Blacks in America has been under either slavery or Jim Crow Laws, which subjected Black people to tremendous hardships and disadvantages in all areas of life; and

WHEREAS, the total estimated population of Cuyahoga County is 1,235,072 and residents who are Black represent approximately 30.5% of the total population, which equates to approximately 376,697 people; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states Public Health is "the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals'; and

WHEREAS, S*tructural/systemic racism*- creates a disparity between Black and White people in nearly all aspects of people's lives but most importantly in **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active,** resulting in adverse health outcomes and shorter life expectancies among people of color, thus creating a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, the following are specific areas of disparity between Black and White people in **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active;** and

HEALTHCARE

WHEREAS, Black people have long faced several challenges in healthcare including higher rates of disease, lower rate of healthcare access, shorter life spans, and poorer health conditions throughout Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Association of Family Physicians have said experiencing racism can play a role in raising the risk of certain chronic health conditions in Black people; and

WHEREAS, Black people have been diagnosed with diabetes at the rate of 25.8% compared to only 7.7% of White people in Cuyahoga County; Black people are 25% more likely to die of breast cancer once diagnosed than White people who are diagnosed with breast cancer in Cuyahoga County; Black people have the highest cardiovascular disease mortality rate among all racial/ethnic groups in Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, in addition to these diseases and an endless number of other health areas, Cuyahoga County is once again reminded how Black people are disporoportionately affected by health crises, most recently with COVID-19, as Black people only represent 30.5% of Cuyahoga County's population, but represent 40% of the County's COVID-19 diagnoses, 45% of all the hospital admissions, and 45% of all the Intensive Care Units admissions related to COVID-19 in the County; and

HEALTHCARE: Child Welfare

WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics has declared racism as a public health issue and that racism against children impacts adolescent health; and

WHEREAS, Black children in Cuyahoga County have significantly higher rates of asthma at a rate of 21% versus 10.3% of White children; and

WHEREAS, First Year Cleveland has reported that infant mortality disproportionately impacts the Black community; Seven out of every ten babies in Cuyahoga County who don't make it to their first birthday are Black; and

HEALTHCARE: Suicide Rates and Life Expectacy

WHEREAS, Black people have attempted suicide nearly three times more than White people in Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, the life expectancy of Black residents is over six years less than White residents in Cuyahoga County; and

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, Black people face widespread racism in policing and the criminal justice system throughout this country and in Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, more than half (52.6%) of Black people in Cuyahoga County reported that they trust law enforcement compared to 84.3% of White people in Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, according to a study conducted by Stanford University, among many other studies, stated that Black drivers are 20% more likely to get pulled over than White drivers; and

WHEREAS, a Yale University study found that Black people are 21.3% more likely to have a gun drawn on them during interaction with police than White people; and

WHEREAS, sentencing policies, implicit racial bias, and socioeconomic inequity contribute to racial disparities at every level of the criminal justice system; overall, Black people are more likely than Whie people to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to face longer sentences; and

WHEREAS, studies have revealed that American courts significantly set higher bail amounts for Black people than White people facing similar criminal charges; Black people are less likely to be released on their own recognizances (signature bonds) and Black people ages 18-29 have their bail set significantly higher than any other group; and

WHEREAS, in Ohio, statistics show that one of every 523 White people will spend time in prison, compared to 1 of every 53 Black people will be imprisoned for some period of time; and

WHEREAS, in Ohio, Black people are more likely to face and receive the Death Penalty; As of 2020, 56% of the population on Ohio's death row are Black men; and

WHEREAS, nearly half (46.6%) of Black people in Cuyahoga County reported that they have been stopped by law enforcement for no reason compared to only 8.1% of White people in Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, Black youth make up 42% of the population in Cuyahoga County between the ages of 10 and 17 years old, but make up 90% of the juvenile justice system in the County, which is eleven times more than White youth in the same age group; and

WHEREAS, although Black people make up less than one third of the population in Cuyahoga County, Black people make up 74% of the jail population in Cuyahoga County; and

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

WHEREAS, facing hunger, access to healthy foods, and food security is tied to how close a person lives to a grocery store; and

WHEREAS, according to Feeding America, Black people are two times more likely to face hunger on a daily basis compared to White people; and

WHEREAS, approximately one out of three people in Cuyahoga County live in a food desert (more than a half a mile away from a grocery store); and

WHEREAS, in Cuyahoga County, 23.5% of White people live in a food desert compared to more than half (56%) of Black people; and

SAFE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

WHEREAS, businesses traditionally are reluctant to invest in historically black communities; and

WHEREAS, historical policies and practices, such as discriminatory lending practices known as "redlining," have shaped the differences in opportunities for safe and affordable housing for Black people; and

WHEREAS, federal agencies financed nearly half of all suburban homes in the 1950s and 1960s, with White people making up 98% of those loans approved; and

WHEREAS, the neighborhoods in Cuyahoga County that consist of majority Black populations have the highest rates of lead poisoning; and

WHEREAS, nearly half (49%) of White people in Cuyahoga County believe that housing is safe and affordable compared to only 26% of Black people; and

WHEREAS, more than two-thirds (70.9%) of White people in Cuyahoga County believe their neighborhoods are quiet and/or extremely safe from crime versus only 42.7% of Black people; and

WELL-PAYING JOBS & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

WHEREAS, in Cuyahoga County, Black people are disproportionately represented in low wage occupations such as health care support, food services, and custodial services compared to White people who disproportionally represent higher wage occupations like management and engineering; and

WHEREAS, in the Cleveland Metropolitan Area, the median income for White residents is 2.1 times more than that of Black residents, which equates to a $60,000 average income for White residents compared to $28,000 average incomes for Black residents; and

WHEREAS, remaining virtually unchanged since before passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the average wealth of White households is more than 6 times the average wealth of Black households; and

WHEREAS, Black people in Cleveland are 1.7 times more likely to be living in poverty than White people; and

QUALITY TRANSPORTATION

WHEREAS, transportation has long been a barrier for Black people; 4 times the amount of Black people than White people in Cuyahoga County rely on public transportation to get to their jobs, go grocery shopping, medical appointments, school, and other activities; and

WHEREAS, a fifth (20%) of all Cuyahoga County households located in a food desert do not have a vehicle; and

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

WHEREAS, Black students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District are 1.7 times more likely to be suspended than their fellow White students; and

WHEREAS, Black residents are up to 4 times more likely to not have home internet access, known as digital redlining, in Cuyahoga County compared to White resident; and

WHEREAS, in Ohio, approximately 61% of Black people graduate High School compared to 86% of White people; and

WHEREAS, more than a third (38.9%) of White people in Cuyahoga County have a bachelor's degree or higher education compared to only 14.7% of Black people; and

SAFE PLACES TO BE ACTIVE

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that Black people experience obesity at a rate of 44.1% compare to White people at 32.6%; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies and medical professionals have linked access to green space and parks to the physical behavior of people; access to parks and green space is much lower in neighborhoods largely occupied by Blacks than Whites; and

WHEREAS, evidence also shows that people will not exercise if they don't feel safe in their neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the conditions that shape health such as access to **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active**, are not spread equitably across Cuyahoga County, resulting in significant differences in health outcomes, life expectancy and infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga County seeks to address the impact of racism on public health at all levels of County government; and

WHEREAS, Anti-racism requires fundamental changes to all structural systems in Cuyahoga County; for equitable policies and programs to be effective, attention, priority, and resources must be allocated to the implementation of strategies that are long-term and sustainable; and

WHEREAS, the Cuyahoga County Executive and the Cuyahoga County Council intend to take immediate action to address these obvious and crippling inequities which are at the root of health disparities in our community and one of the effects of racism; and

WHEREAS, because of these factors, statistics, information, and history, the Cuyahoga County Council and Cuyahoga County Executive desire to declare racism a public health crisis in Cuyahoga County; and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga County is committing its resources to openly and honestly address racism and to improve areas of all of the County's residents including ending the disparity between Black and White people when it comes to **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active**.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO:

SECTION 1. That the Cuyahoga County Council and County Executive hereby declare racism to be a public health crisis in Cuyahoga County.

SECTION 2. Cuyahoga County is committing its resources in all areas of its government and throughout all of its Departments and Divisions to openly and honestly address racism and to eliminate the disparity between Black and White people when it comes to **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active.**

SECTION 3. Cuyahoga County Council and County Executive direct the County Equity Commission and the Cuyahoga County Citizens Advisory Council on Equity to review, focus, and provide recommendations to reduce the disparity between Black and White people when it comes to **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active** including the following areas with a status report no later than December 31, 2020:

a) Any changes to County policies, procedures, procurement, structure of County government, and the Cuyahoga County Code;

b) Provide input to educate and train County employees on how their decision-making and work impact Black people;

c) Provide any recommendations to make changes to the County's recruitment and advancement of employees, governance, leadership, procurement policies, economic development, specific dedication of funds, and any other necessary changes needed through legislative action to eliminate racism in Cuyahoga County;

d) Provide recommendations how the County can work with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, and other community and interested partners, to prioritize and identify resources for data collection and reporting on racial disparities in health throughout Cuyahoga County;

e) Develop and advocate for a legislative agenda at the local, state and federal levels of government to help end racism and improve the public health crisis that currently exists for Black people;

f) Provide recommendations to change the 2012 Equity Plan for Cuyahoga County to include social reform that will engage County employees at all levels of government, community partners, and populations who obtain services through the County in the following core ares: **healthcare, the criminal justice system, healthy food, safe and affordable housing, well-paying jobs and business ownership opportunities, quality transportation, educational opportunities, and safe places to be active;**

i. The strategic planning process shall integrate equity and social reform in all major areas of County Government including:

1. Leadership, Operations, and Services
2. Policies, Budgets, and Contracts
3. Organizational Culture and Workforce
4. Community Partnerships
5. Communication and Education
6. Facility and System Improvements;

g) The strategic plan's goals and objectives will be aligned with the County's biennial budget process in order to oversee all monetary actions towards the design, monitoring, and advancement of equitable strategies County-wide;

h) The County Equity Commission and Cuyahoga County Advisory Council on Equity will make recommendations for a data-measurement stategy for determining and publicy reporting outcomes to the County Executive and County Council on an annual basis.

SECTION 4. The County Equity Commission and and the Cuyahoga County Citizens Advisory Council on Equity will provide regular updates to the County Executive and the County Council, including the Human Resources, Appointments & Equity Committee.

SECTION 5. Cuyahoga County is committed to implement policy changes in response to the findings or recommendations from the County Equity Commission and the Cuyahoga County Citizens Advisory Council on Equity.

SECTION 6. It is necessary that this Resolution become immediately effective for the usual daily operation of the County; the preservation of public peace, health, or safety in the County; and any additional reasons set forth in the preamble. Provided that this Resolution receives the affirmative vote of at least eight members of Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon the earliest occurrence of any of the following: (1) its approval by the County Executive through signature, (2) the expiration of the time during which it may be disapproved by the County Executive under Section 3.10(6) of the Cuyahoga County Charter, or (3) its passage by at least eight members of Council after disapproval pursuant to Section 3.10(7) of the Cuyahoga County Charter. Otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

SECTION 7. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council relating to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of the Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

On a motion by _____ , seconded by _____, the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted.

Yeas:

Nays:

_____	_____
County Council President	Date
_____	_____
County Executive	Date
_____	_____
Clerk of Council	Date

First Reading/Referred to Committee:
Committee(s) Assigned:

Journal _____

_____, 2020