A RESOLUTION DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS (S. Res. 172/H. Res. 344)

BACKGROUND

- As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recognized, racism is a threat to public health. Centuries of racism in the U.S. have created deep inequities in housing, income, healthcare, education, public safety, transportation, food access, and other social determinants of health,

- These factors are interrelated and have a profound negative impact on the long-term physical and mental health of millions of people of color. Many of these impacts are even more significant for women of color. For example, in the U.S.:
  - **Infant and Maternal Mortality**: The infant mortality rate is 10.8 per 1,000 Black births, compared to 4.6 for white births. Moreover, Black women are more than 3x as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women—in some cities, they have maternal death rates up to 12x higher than white women—and American Indian and Alaska Native women are 2.3x as likely as white women to die from pregnancy-related causes.
  - **Chronic Health Conditions**: Between 2017 and 2018, 14.7% of Native American, 12.5% of Latinx and 11.7% of Black adults were diagnosed with diabetes, as compared to 7.5% of white adults.
  - **Pay Gap**: On average, Latinas are paid just 55 cents, Native American women 60 cents, Black women 63 cents, and Asian American and Pacific Islander women from 52-85 cents per every dollar earned by a while non-Hispanic male for the same work.
  - **Food Insecurity**: Black (21.2%) and Latinx (16.2%) households are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.
  - **Violent Policing**: Black men are about 2.5x more likely, Native American men are between 1.2 and 1.7x more likely, and Latinos are between 1.2 and 1.3 times more likely to be killed by police than are white men. Similarly, Black women are about 1.4x more likely and Native American women are 1.1 to 2.1x more likely to be killed.
  - **Housing**: 55% of Black and 53.5% of Latinx households spend more than 30% of their household income on housing, as compared to 42.6% of white households.
  - **Hate Crimes**: Over 3,795 incidents of violence and harassment have been reported to Stop AAPI Hate between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021, and Asian women reported 2.3x more incidents than men. 1 in 5 Asian Americans who have experienced racism display racial trauma.

- Addressing racism and racial inequities across these myriad systems requires a comprehensive and coordinated public health response.
WHAT THE RESOLUTION DOES

- Expresses support for the resolutions that have been drafted, introduced, and adopted by cities and localities across the United States declaring racism a public health crisis;
- Declares racism a public health crisis in the United States;
- Commits to—
  - Establishing a nationwide strategy to address health disparities and inequity across all sectors in society;
  - Dismantling systemic practices and policies that perpetuate racism;
  - Advancing reforms to address years of policies that have led to poor health outcomes for communities of color; and
  - Promoting efforts to address the social determinants of health—especially for Black, Latinx and Native American people in the United States, and other people of color.

DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS ADVANCES EQUITY AND EFFECTIVE POLICY

There is a growing consensus among public health experts, researchers, scholars, medical practitioners, and elected officials that racism is a public health issue that requires urgent action at all levels of government.

- In April 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared that racism is a serious threat to public health.
- As of June 2021, at least 115 cities, 82 counties, and 10 states have declared racism a public health crisis at state and local leve. Declarations have been passed at city, county or state levels in 35 states.
- Leading organizations representing elected officials and experts from the medical and public health fields have issued substantive reports and policies recognizing racism as a public health issue, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

By declaring racism a public health crisis, Congress would take an important step toward greater racial equity and more effective policy that is consistent with emerging expert consensus of public health. By co-sponsoring and passing S.Res. 172 and H.Res. 344, Congress would:

- Encourage concrete action to address health disparities and inequity across all sectors in society.
- Recognize racism's impact on the broad array of social determinants of health that have contributed to negative health outcomes for people of color, and
- Create a framework and commitment to advance policy solutions that will enhance coordination across sectors, improve resource allocation, invest in prevention, and create opportunity for all.

Please co-sponsor and pass S. Res. 172 and H. Res. 344!