

RESOLUTION NO. 15995

A **RESOLUTION** of the Board of County Commissioners declaring racism a crisis in Thurston County, Washington.

Whereas, race is a social construct with no biologic basis; and

Whereas, systemic racism is institutional and structural, and racism is a system that structures opportunity and assigns value based on the social interpretation of how an individual looks; and

Whereas, throughout history, systemic racism has manifested as discrimination and oppression directed towards communities of color, resulting in trauma and harm to the health and well-being of targets of racism, their families, their communities, and subsequent generations; and

Whereas, systemic racism causes discrimination that impacts all aspects of life including housing, education, employment, and criminal justice; and racism itself is a social determinant of health; and

Whereas, the impact of racism on health is well documented; many studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes for communities of color; and

Whereas, racism is a root cause of constricted economic and social mobility; and

Whereas, 25% of Thurston County residents are Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color; and

Whereas, Thurston County residents' life expectancy is 81 years of age; however, Thurston County residents who are Native American have a life expectancy of 72 years of age, Native Hawaiian's and Pacific Islander's is 73 years of age, and African American's is 78 years of age; and

Whereas, the infant mortality rate of Thurston County African American babies is 9.9% and Hispanic babies is 4.8% compared to the county as a whole at 4.4%; and

Whereas, Thurston County government has an essential role in changing harmful policies and practices that perpetuate systemic racism; and

Whereas, Thurston County government will work to advance racial equity so we maximize all lives within a community and culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and economic justice in services to our diverse community; and

Whereas, Thurston County government has the unique opportunity to advance policies and practices that promote racial equity.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Thurston County, Washington, does resolve as follows:

Section 1. The Board of County Commissioners declares racism a crisis affecting many of our residents, threatening their health, safety, and well-being, now and over the long-term, and requires the adoption of comprehensive solutions.

Section 2. The Board of County Commissioners commits to work on advancing racial equity maximizing all lives within our community, and establish a culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and economic justice in services to our diverse community.

Section 3. The Board of County Commissioners directs the Thurston County Manager to create a county Racial Equity Action Plan by June 30, 2021 and report semi-annually on progress to the Board thereafter.

Section 4. The Board of County Commissioners direct the Thurston County Manager to develop a resolution establishing a policy advisory committee that will advise the Board on meaningful policies to advance racial equity across county government for the benefit of the entire community.

Section 5. The Board of County Commissioners directs the Thurston County Manager to work with county offices and departments to review hiring practices to recruit and retain Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in county government, including a comprehensive re-assessment of our collective organizational mindset, policies, training requirements, and overall procedures.


Section 6. The Board of County Commissioners commits to establishing alliances and securing adequate resources, including funding, to successfully accomplish the actions identified in this resolution so that race no longer predicts the quality of life and length of life for Thurston County residents.

Section 7. Thurston County asks businesses, non-profits, academia, large institutions, faith-based organizations, service clubs, and residents to also rise to the challenge of this crisis by committing to help eliminate systemic racism in our community.

Section 8. The Board of County Commissioners commits to promoting equity, inclusion, and diversity in all aspects of county government and recognizes addressing systemic racism requires long-term commitment, intentional actions, on-going learning, and meaningful change informed and led by communities of color.

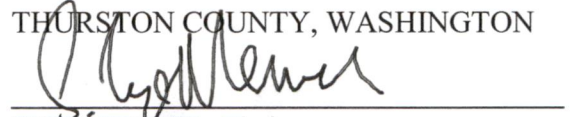
ADOPTED: March 9, 2021

ATTEST:

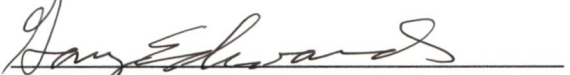


Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON



TYE MENSER, Chair



GARY EDWARDS, Vice-Chair



CAROLINA MEJIA, Commissioner

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
JON TUNHEIM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



Deputy Prosecuting Attorney