

REFERENCE TITLE: racism; public health crisis

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-fifth Legislature
First Regular Session
2021

SCR 1017

Introduced by
Senators Quezada: Alston, Mendez; Representative Cano

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING RACISM TO BE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND AFFIRMING A COMMITMENT
TO END RACISM AND IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Whereas, race is a social construction with no biological basis; and
2 Whereas, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions.
3 Individual racism is internalized or interpersonal, while systemic racism
4 is institutional and structures opportunity and assigns value based on the
5 social interpretation of how one looks that unfairly disadvantages some
6 individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and
7 communities and saps the strength of the whole society by wasting human
8 resources; and

9 Whereas, racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing,
10 education, employment and criminal justice; and

11 Whereas, an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a
12 social determinant of health, and more than 100 studies have linked racism
13 to worse health outcomes; and

14 Whereas, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by
15 social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to environmental
16 contaminants, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike or run
17 and inadequate health education; and

18 Whereas, a wealth of medical research suggests that racism plays an
19 important role in the fact that African American women are more likely
20 than any other race to give birth to premature babies; and

21 Whereas, Arizona Department of Health Services data shows that the
22 infant mortality rate among African Americans in Arizona is significantly
23 higher than the national average; and

24 Whereas, immigration policies that sanction institutional practices
25 of discrimination, such as the ethno-racial profiling and mistreatment
26 sanctioned by Arizona law, are forms of structural racism and everyday
27 violence; and

28 Whereas, studies suggest that immigration laws that militarize
29 communities and lead to everyday violence exacerbate racial health
30 disparities; and

31 Whereas, the American Public Health Association launched a National
32 Campaign Against Racism; and

33 Whereas, this state's responsibilities to address racism include
34 reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in
35 racial justice work; and

36 Whereas, while there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis," the
37 health impact of racism clearly rises to one proposed definition: "The
38 problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over
39 the long-term and it must require the adoption of largescale solutions."
40 Therefore

41 Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House of
42 Representatives concurring:

43 1. That the Members of the Legislature proclaim racism to be a
44 public health crisis affecting our entire society.

1 2. That the Members of the Legislature commit to working to create
2 equity and justice-oriented governance.

3 3. That the Members of the Legislature commit to developing a work
4 plan that includes educational efforts to address and dismantle racism,
5 expand state personnel's understanding of racism and how racism affects
6 individual and population health and provide tools to assist personnel to
7 engage actively and authentically with communities of color.

8 4. That the Members of the Legislature support policies that
9 improve health in communities of color and local, state and federal
10 initiatives that advance social justice.