

Legislation Text

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A RESOLUTION encouraging the Washington State Legislature to address racism as a public health crisis, including addressing gun violence, gender-based violence and the opioid crisis.

WHEREAS, racism ingrained in our institutions, policies and practices have harmful impacts that unfairly disadvantage Black, Indigenous and People of Color ("BIPOC") and unfairly advantages people who identify as white, and

WHEREAS, decades of data collected by Public Health - Seattle & King County have demonstrated how BIPOC communities are affected by both acute impacts, such as gun violence, and chronic impacts such as higher rates of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, maternal and infant mortality, underweight babies and shorter lives overall, and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2020, the King County Board of Health passed Resolution 20-08 declaring racism a public health crisis and committing to work to advance a public health approach in addressing institutional and systemic racism, and

WHEREAS, the public health system works to prevent illness and disease while supporting the work of community partners, and

WHEREAS, King County is taking a public health approach to tackling gun violence in our communities as youth gun violence is a fatal epidemic where Black, LatinX, and Indigenous young people in King County are disproportionately being exposed to gun violence, and

WHEREAS, impacts of gender-based violence are compounded by racial, gender, sexual orientation and other forms of oppression, and Black, Indigenous and other people of color, people living in poverty,

LGBTQ2S+ people, elders, people with disabilities and other people targeted by oppression are affected by gender-based violence in significant and complex ways, including reduced access to appropriate supports, and

WHEREAS, fentanyl and other drug overdoses continue to grow exponentially year after year in King County with fentanyl representing approximately half of overdose deaths;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

The Board of Health calls on the Washington State Legislature to urgently address racism as a public health crisis by:

- A. Passing policies that provide education and incentives for safe storage of firearms;
- B. Supporting efforts to address gender-based violence; and
- C. Addressing the opioid epidemic.