



Sponsor Testimony

Presented by: Representative Erica C. Crawley

House Bill 620

Health Committee

Representative Scott Lipps, Chair

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Lipps and members of the Health Committee; Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 620. House Bill 620 would task the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) with conducting an analysis of all bills to determine whether the proposed legislation would have a positive, adverse or neutral impact on the health of Ohioans and on the attainment of health equity in the state.

Health equity is a widely used term when discussing health policies that refers to the efforts to eliminate health gaps. In order to achieve health equity, it is important to address the historical and contemporary injustices and remove barriers to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences.

Health & Equity in All Policies (HEiAP) is derived from the World Health Organization's Health in All Policies (HiAP) initiative.ⁱ It is an innovative approach to creating and implementing public policies that systematically take into account the health implications of policy decisions. By emphasizing the need to collaborate across sectors to achieve common health goals, HiAP is further defined as a change in the systems that determine how decision-makers in local, state, and federal governments ensure that policies have neutral or beneficial impacts on the determinants of health. By broadening the scope of this concept through the addition of "equity" as a component, this policy will provide the State with a more critical look at the overall context in which Ohio's vulnerable populations are impacted by the social determinates of health such as education, housing, safe neighborhoods, healthy foods, transportation, employment, etc.

According to the economic research conducted by the Prevention Institute, investments in activities that were assessed for their impact on health and equity such as creating physically active communities and increasing access to healthy foods could result in a large return on investment in just a few years.ⁱⁱ With Ohio ranking 38th nationally on a composite measure of

health value, adopting this common sense approach would help the State make great strides in improving health outcomes for all of Ohio's citizens.ⁱⁱⁱ

I would also like to discuss the importance of this legislation in terms of our current events. COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color and rural Appalachian Ohio residents. Health equity doesn't only refer to health impacts based on race, but rather it holistically recognizes the gaps in healthcare based on all social determinants. Ohio's COVID-19 Minority Health Strike Force acknowledges the social and economic factors such as less access to care, less income, and discrimination that have contributed to the disproportionate COVID-19 impact on communities of color. The Ohio Department of Health stated that although black people comprise only 14% of Ohio's population, they make up 25% of the COVID-19 cases.

My legislation, House Concurrent Resolution 31 which declares racism a public health crisis and promotes racial equity, goes hand in hand with HB 620. The resolution recognizes the inequities in the healthcare system based on race and works to correct the biases while also advancing equity. HCR 31 also acknowledges the systemic racism and historical racism seen in redlining and our inequitable school funding formula that negatively impacts current outcomes regarding healthcare, economic security, housing, and educational achievement.

There is definitive data that shows racism negatively influences health outcomes and HB 620 works to identify certain legislation's health impact and determine which bills are supportive, neutral, or unsupportive of health equity.

Chairman Lipps and members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to speak on behalf of HB 620, and at this time I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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- i. "What you need to know about Health in All Policies" World Health Organization.
 - ii. "Measuring What Works to Achieve Health Equity: Metrics for the Determinants of Health" Prevention Institute.
 - iii. "America's Health Rankings" United Health Foundation.