

Chairman David Burke and members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sondra Fischer. I am someone who was born and raised in Ohio. Now I live in the Democratic Republic of Congo but I am still invested in my state. My whole family is in Northeast Ohio where they have been since my great-grandparents settled as immigrants that came from Germany and Ireland in the early 1900s. I strongly support SCR 14.

You might think that I live on a different continent in a different situation where my whitey self is a minority but racism is a problem in the whole world. From a global standpoint and reviewing the UN Development Index you can see that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have more problems in health, infant mortality and maternal wellness. This is not an accident. Countries in Africa have dealt with a systematic racism from colonization that has created inequities in the health systems across the globe. The country where I reside is ranked 179 out of 189 in the world. The country where I previously resided is ranked 15 but the problem persists. Definitely racism contributes to health inequities in the United States and the whole world. While my ability to change policy around the world is limited I can work to establish policy in my home state that will have a positive impact on communities.

As a teacher I know that the life students are born into greatly impacts their lives. The health and wellness of all children is very much impacted by their location, access to healthy foods, healthcare and education. We know that the citizens of Ohio are not on equal footing. We know certain communities have to deal with more trauma, policing, racism and poverty than others. Racism is a public health crisis according to a June 4, 2020 op-ed in the Washington Post by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Dean Michelle Williams and Jeffrey Sánchez, a former Massachusetts state representative and a lecturer at Harvard Chan. It should be obvious to all that we support a bill that aims to acknowledge and repair these inequities that exist in our state of Ohio.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote yes on this life-saving bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Sondra Fischer