



## **SCR 14 Testimony Concerning Racism as a Public Health Crisis**

**By Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.,**

**Executive Director, The Ohio Council of Churches**

One of the most difficult realities for many to accept is that of the contaminating sewage, which is racism that continues to seep into the pipes and pores of our social economic, political, and religious systems and remains there, frequently raw yet sometimes refined, and extremely lethal to Black bodies and those of other People of Color.

Due to decades of denial and fragmented, fable-like presentations of US history and economic systems of our nation, racism, like the deadly virus we are fighting now, often goes undetected by many power/privilege-possessing people because their perspectives, values, and fears form so much of what is called valid or “mainstream,” and their power and privilege give them the perceived right to define what

racism is and to declare that the systems they manage or benefit from have tested negative for systemic racism.

You see, Black people and other People of Color, we have the right testing equipment to detect the domestic violence terror that is racism.

We have our emotional scars, economic bruises, institutional injury, ballot box battery, wounds from red lining in real estate, and physical disfigurements and death, mysterious and deliberate, at the hands of those sworn to serve and protect seemingly everybody but us. All of these and more indicate that America has tested positive for racism, a social/political/economic and religious virus that is a clear and present, extinction-level danger not only to Black bodies not permitted to breathe, but to the national body itself.

While caught up in the midst of the local and national pandemic of racism, Black people and all others of goodwill must refuse to put on masks of false wellness, pretending that a societal reset button will soon be pressed and life will get back to normal.

We must reject normal as normal has never been kind to Black aspirations and bodies. There can be no reforming of racism-infested

systems, but only transformation. As a man of faith, I believe transformation is possible.

If Ohio and our nation are to truly be exceptional, we must take exception to any doctrine or treatise, any schematic or system that denies, weakens, or ignores the God-given worth and dignity of Black bodies.

If Ohio and our nation are to truly be exceptional, we must declare in this chamber and throughout the corridors of this grand structure, that we will live by a reverse Miranda Ruling, meaning we will give up the privileged and neglectful right to remain silent.

We will speak up and speak out and call racism what it is: a clear and present, extinction-level public health threat to Black people and to all that we hold dear, for it will destroy us all. I believe SCR 14 is not about being politically correct; it is about be morally correct. Thank you very much. May God bless us all!

The Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Director  
The Ohio Council of Churches  
6161 Busch Boulevard, Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43229  
Office: 614.372.8010  
Cell: 216.905.5119  
Email: [JSullivan@ohcouncilchs.org](mailto:JSullivan@ohcouncilchs.org)  
Website: [www.ohiocouncilofchurches.nationbuilder.com](http://www.ohiocouncilofchurches.nationbuilder.com)