

THE TIME IS NOW TO LIVE UNITED



June 8, 2020

Dear Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee,

My name is Jim Mullen and I am the President and CEO of United Way of Summit County. I write to you today to express my support for SCR 14, which proposes to declare racism a public health crisis and to ask the Governor to establish a working group to promote racial equity in Ohio.

United Way of Summit County is committed to creating a community where all individuals and families are welcomed and treated fairly. We are committed to helping give a voice to those in Summit County who want to fight systemic inequity and injustice through advocacy, through education and by mobilizing the caring power of our community to make neighborhoods and families stronger.

We stand with those fighting against the systemic inequities that afflict communities across our country - including our own. The murder of George Floyd is just one of many recent examples of how racism and structural injustices embedded in the very fabric of our society manifest themselves in fear, distrust, and the stolen lives of African Americans.

Over the last three months, our community has faced a deadly new pandemic. Now, our country is coming face to face with another plague - one that is just as deadly, and is as old as our country. This moment in our nation's history has arrived to test our resolve, our capacity to care for one another, and our love of justice. For the future of our community and our country, we must not fail this test. It is time for all of us to stand together and dismantle the systemic racism that poisons our society and perpetuates pain and suffering across generations. Here in Ohio, let us choose love over hate, righteousness over oppression, and a just future over the sins of our past.

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee Agency Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. We appreciate your consideration of the impact this resolution would have on members of our community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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