

Thank you Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. My name is Priyanka Pandey and I am here to testify in favor of SCR 14, declaring that racism is a public health crisis.

I am going to be a medical student in the fall in West Virginia and have just recently completed by Master's in Anatomy at The Ohio State University. In my program I've been lucky enough to teach over 500 students and come into contact with people from all over the globe. My experience with racism being a public health crisis stems from what police brutality is doing to predominantly black communities. Over policing has clearly caused so much physical harm to black people and the perpetrators walk away with virtual no consequence. You have parents who have to explain to their kids how to not get shot in a routine traffic stop...how in the world is that good for anyone's mental health? Constantly having to fear for your life and the lives of your loved ones leads to many mental and physical health problems such as depression and high blood pressure. The black population already has statistically higher numbers when it comes to these ailments. This has always been an urgent matter but now it is finally on center stage. The declaration that racism is a public health issue on a state level would be a huge step in the right direction towards helping black communities get the help that they need, as they suffer from symptoms of the rampant racism seen on through every avenue. I hope the state will do what is right on this issue. Be on the right side of history and take a stand against bigotry.

I appreciate your time and hope that you have great day.

Thank you,

Priyanka Pandey