

I am Ariana Johnson, I am a 29- year-old Black Woman who is a resident of Garfield Heights State Senator Sandra Williams' district. I would like to testify in person encouraging The State of Ohio to acknowledge racism as a public crisis specifically as it pertains to physical and mental health. In various Black communities specifically in Cleveland, Ohio communities that are filled with men, women, children, grandchildren, grandparents, aunts, uncles and loved ones these communities are infiltrated with liquor stores, cheap fast food restaurants grocery stores that sell expired produce and items on their shelves and there are billboards constantly advertising a brand of liquor or cigarettes.

This is a travesty in comparison to other neighborhoods where there are a large percentage of grocery stores that sell fresh produce and items, stores who offer organic alternatives, vitamins and minerals, restaurants who offer healthier fast food choices and there is not a billboard promoting anything that is detrimental to anyone's health in sight however, there are gyms and community centers who offer exercise classes for all ages at a reasonable price and coincidentally you will find the majority of these options and choices that lead to a longer, healthier lifestyle are all accessible to neighborhoods with a larger percentage of white residents.

If you look at the research (that I will present later) you will see that the average person life-span has a lot to do with the neighborhood they live in and the services that are provided in that neighborhood and if that neighborhood is purposefully not being given the same resources as another and it's a detriment to a communities health and this is happening as a direct correlation of racial bias and stereotypes this is a major generational problem and it needs to be acknowledged and addressed.

Not only is physical health at risk but mental health as well. We are living In the era of Tanisha Anderson, a 37 year old East Cleveland resident who suffered from mental illness. Tanisha was handcuffed and her head was slammed against the concrete by an East Cleveland police officer causing her death, that story hit home to me more than you'll know because my sister suffers from Mental illness and that could have been her. We need to provide more services for mental health to the Black community other than leaving them in the hands of the police. In communities in Ohio where the majority of the residents are white and a white resident is battling mental illness there are given streams of affordable and free services, this sense of urgency and services also has to be rendered to the Black community and other communities of color. I would like to present this information to the state house as I feel that health disparity is a major issue within the confines of systemic racism and I would really like to testify about it. If you would like to contact me my number is (216) 240-1332 or you can email me at johnsonariana10@gmail.com. Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,
Ariana Johnson