

Senator Burke and Members of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 14, which declares racism as a public health crisis. I respectfully encourage you to adopt this resolution.

I have been Superintendent and CEO of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities for the past 20 years and began working in this field in the early 70s. Part of our mission every day is to do all we can to guarantee fair and equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities. We do good work and have made amazing strides in education, housing and employment, but we can do more.

Likewise, we all can do more and better to eliminate other forms of discrimination such as racism. I can't tell you the number of stories I have heard from my staff who have shared their life experiences and how, even today, they are subjected to blatant racism. Recently, one of my staff members shared that she was not permitted in a person's home to help an individual with a disability because of her race. I am aware of situations where staff members have been singled out simply because of the color of their skin or they have been called racist names.

As a part of Franklin County government, I am proud and supportive of the work of our County Commissioners related to reducing poverty and eliminating racism. This work led to a blueprint for our county leaders with specific goals and action steps. Their study also led to discussions and facts related to racial disparities and this past month our Commissioners adopted a resolution that declares racism as a public health crisis. Our Board will formally vote on this on June 24, 2020. Already, the Commissioners' action has led to increased dialogue and understanding, which we know will lead to improved understanding and actions to reduce racism.

We respectfully encourage your support of S.C.R. #14 to encourage this dialogue and actions that will benefit the entire state. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Jed Morison, Superintendent/CEO

Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities
2879 Johnstown Road
Columbus, Ohio 43219
(614) 342-5949
(614) 342-5001 (fax)
www.fcbdd.org