

Resolution declaring Anti-Black Racism a Human Rights and Public Health Crisis in San Francisco

WHEREAS, racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call "race"), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources¹; and

WHEREAS, anti-Black racism is hostility towards, opposition to, pathologizing of and racism towards Black people and culture, manifested through individual, internalized, interpersonal, institutional or systemic interactions, decisions, processes, and outcomes²; and

WHEREAS, public health studies have concluded that structural racism, not one's race, is the explanation for health inequities³; and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association (APHA) lists racism as the driving force of the racial wealth gap and educational attainment gap⁴; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of public health practitioners to ensure equitable healthcare access and health outcomes across the City and County of San Francisco, including addressing the social determinants of health; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of human rights advocates to ensure that the City and County of San Francisco reconcile its legacy of harm and trauma inflicted on marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, Black San Franciscans have persistently had poorer health than their fellow residents in a wide array of measures⁵; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, a cross-divisional group convened and established the Black/African American Health Initiative (BAAHI) to focus on correcting these disparities⁶; and

WHEREAS, in San Francisco, Black people have a lower life expectancy than persons of other races/ethnicities⁷; and

¹ <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>

² <http://blackhealthalliance.ca/home/antiblack-racism/>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1113412/>

⁴ APHA (2020). Racism and Health. <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>

⁵ San Francisco Department of Public Health, BAAHI. (2018). (rep.). *Black/African American Health Report* (pp. 3).

⁶ San Francisco Department of Public Health, BAAHI. (2018). (rep.). *Black/African American Health Report* (pp. 5).

⁷ <http://www.sfhph.org/mortality.html>

WHEREAS, Black people have the highest mortality rate for 9 of the top 10 causes of death in San Francisco⁸; and

WHEREAS, Black San Francisco residents are the most likely to lack health insurance⁹; and

WHEREAS, age-adjusted rate of hospitalizations due to major depression among Black/African Americans is almost 5 times higher than among Asian & Pacific Islanders who have the lowest rate (23.79 vs 4.93 per 10,000 residents). High rates of hospitalizations among Black/African Americans likely result from inadequate access to medical care¹⁰; and

WHEREAS, many of the sexually transmitted infections, including chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV, occur at higher rates in Black San Francisco residents in San Francisco¹¹; and

WHEREAS, in San Francisco, significant maternal and infant death disparities persist. Over the past 10 years, Black birthing people had about 4 out of 100 births, but experienced 5 out of 10 total maternal deaths, and 15 out of 100 infant deaths¹²; and

WHEREAS, the pre-term birth rate for Black infants born in San Francisco is twice as high as the rate for white infants (13.8% vs 7.3%).¹³ Pre-term birth is associated with lower educational attainment and lower earning potential¹⁴; and

WHEREAS, research thoroughly documents that economic insecurity causes physical and psychological stress, which leads to preterm births and chronic health conditions, such as heart disease¹⁵; and

WHEREAS, predominantly Black U.S. counties are experiencing a three-fold higher COVID-19 infection rate and a six-fold higher death rate than predominantly white counties¹⁶; and

⁸ San Francisco Department of Public Health, BAAHI. (2018). (rep.). *Black/African American Health Report* (pp. 11).

⁹ <http://www.sfhip.org/health-care-access-and-quality.html>

¹⁰ San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership. (2019). (rep.). *San Francisco Community Health Needs Assessment*. (pp. 3). Retrieved from <http://www.sfhip.org/>

¹¹ San Francisco Department of Public Health, BAAHI. (2018). (rep.). *Black/African American Health Report* (pp. 11).

¹² <http://www.sfhip.org/maternal--infant-mortality.html>

¹³ San Francisco Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Epidemiology Tableau Dashboard. (Accessed August 2018). SF Preterm Birth 5-Year Dashboard by Social Determinants 2018.

¹⁴ Behrman, R. E., & Butler, A. S. (2007). Societal costs of preterm birth. In *Preterm birth: causes, consequences, and prevention*. National Academies Press (US).

¹⁵ Bailey, Z. D., Krieger, N., Agénor, M., Graves, J., Linos, N., & Bassett, M. T. (2017). Structural racism and health inequities in the USA: evidence and interventions. *The Lancet*, 389(10077), 1453-1463.

¹⁶ Hlavinka, Elizabeth. (May 2020). *COVID-19 Killing African Americans at Shocking Rates*.

WHEREAS, Black people are overrepresented in frontline jobs such as Muni operators, the postal service, and home health aid industry¹⁷, and have remained on their jobs as essential workers through the shelter in place order, leading to higher rates of exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is killing Black Americans at alarming rates. In San Francisco, Black residents make up 4.9% of the population¹⁸, but represent almost 9% of COVID-19 deaths; and

WHEREAS, the alarming rates at which COVID-19 is killing Black people extends beyond comorbidities and can be attributed to decades of spatial segregation, inequitable access to testing and treatment, and withholding racial/ethnicity data from reports on virus outcomes¹⁹; and

WHEREAS, amongst the trans community, Black trans women face an epidemic of violence, disproportionately experiencing fatal violence, unemployment, poverty, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Black people are overrepresented in domestic violence cases reported across age groups in San Francisco²⁰; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, African American children, youth, cis and trans women represented the majority of reported human trafficking cases in San Francisco²¹; and

WHEREAS, Black people report experiencing nearly 60% of all hate violence in San Francisco²²; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco DPH has recognized incarceration as a public health issue²³; and

WHEREAS, Black people are disproportionately represented throughout the criminal justice system in San Francisco; and

¹⁷ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18.htm>

¹⁸ San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership. (2019). (rep.). *San Francisco Community Health Needs Assessment*. (pp. 13). Retrieved from <http://www.sfhip.org/>

¹⁹ Hlavinka, Elizabeth. (May 2020). *COVID-19 Killing African Americans at Shocking Rates*.

²⁰ <https://sfgov.org/dosw/sites/default/files/Family%20Violence%20in%20San%20Francisco%20Report%20DRAFT%208.13.2018.pdf>

²¹ https://sfgov.org/dosw/sites/default/files/Human%20Trafficking%20in%20San%20Francisco%20-%202017%20Data%20Report_3.pdf

²² <https://sfgov.org/dosw/violence-against-women-girls-san-francisco>

²³ [https://www.sfdph.org/dph/hc/HCAgen/2019/March%205/Resolution%20HC%20Incarceration%20draft%20_edits_2.28.2019%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/hc/HCAgen/2019/March%205/Resolution%20HC%20Incarceration%20draft%20_edits_2.28.2019%20(1).pdf)

WHEREAS, about 45% of all San Francisco Police Department use-of-force cases involved Black people in 2019²⁴; and

WHEREAS, Black drivers and pedestrians accounted for 25% of all SFPD stops during the last three months of 2019 and roughly 40% of nonmandatory searches²⁵; and

WHEREAS, Black people make up 4.9% of San Francisco but 41% of those arrested, 43 percent of those booked into jail, and 38 percent of cases filed by prosecutors between 2008 and 2014²⁶; and

WHEREAS, Black suspects in San Francisco are less likely to have their cases dropped or dismissed than white suspects, and receive longer prison and jail sentences than others²⁷; and

WHEREAS, Black women constitute nearly half of all female arrests and experience arrest rates 13 times higher than women of other races²⁸; and

WHEREAS, Black people in San Francisco are 7.1 times more likely to be arrested than white people²⁹; and

WHEREAS, there is strong evidence establishing the connection between housing safety, security, and affordability to health outcomes as a social determinant of health; and

WHEREAS, Black households have a distinct disadvantage compared to white and Asian homebuyers, as they can only afford 5.3 percent of home sale listings in San Francisco³⁰; and

WHEREAS, Black people have the lowest homeownership rates in San Francisco at thirty-one percent³¹; and

WHEREAS, Black people were systematically displaced by urban renewal in San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s³² which subsequently led to a persistent decline in the population; and

²⁴ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Nearly-half-of-SF-police-use-of-force-cases-last-15334548.php>

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ https://sfdistrictattorney.org/sites/default/files/MacDonald_Raphael_December42017_FINALREPORT%20%28002%29.pdf

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ http://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/disproportionate_arrests_in_san_francisco.pdf

²⁹ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/S-F-grapples-with-racial-disparity-in-arrests-6347686.php>

³⁰ <https://www.zillow.com/research/affordable-home-listings-by-race-19419/>

³¹ Ibid

³² Todd Whitney, "A Brief History of Black San Francisco," Crosscurrents (San Francisco, CA: KALW, February 24, 2016), <https://www.kalw.org/post/brief-history-black-san-francisco>.

WHEREAS, redevelopment intentionally targeted and disrupted Black neighborhoods and the Black economy in San Francisco³³; and

WHEREAS, Black people represent 37% of the city's unhoused population, a number that accounts for 5 percent of all Black residents in the City; and

WHEREAS, Black residents comprise nearly forty percent of all public housing residents; and

WHEREAS, government-sanctioned racial discrimination in lending and the sale and renting of homes—from racial covenants to redlining to exclusionary zoning— has made housing a central feature of racial inequity in the city and the country³⁴; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco's Black population has declined at nearly four times the rate of the Bay Area, overall; and

WHEREAS, Black renter and owner households in San Francisco are the most “severely cost burdened” by their housing costs, with about 25% and 20% spending over half of their income on rent and mortgage, respectively; and

WHEREAS, Black families in San Francisco have the lowest median household income of all groups (\$30,000)³⁵; and

WHEREAS, the racist legacy of policies like redlining, racial covenants, and the Social Security Act prevented Black families from building wealth, and keeps them in neighborhoods with lower access to traditional banking resources and higher concentrations of predatory pay-day loans³⁶; and

WHEREAS, racist hiring, promotion, compensation and retention practices against Black employees in San Francisco have been widely documented; and

WHEREAS, despite the abundance of wealth in San Francisco, the racial wealth gap and gentrification have contributed to the mass displacement of Black San Franciscans³⁷; and

WHEREAS, the Black population in San Francisco is the only racial group to consistently decline in every census count since 1970; and

³³ See: Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁴ https://default.sfplanning.org/publications_reports/Housing-Needs-and-Trends-Report-2018.pdf

³⁵ American Community Survey (2018). https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&table=DP03&tid=ACSDP5Y2018.DP03&q=0400000US06_050000US06075

³⁶ <https://publicpolicy.stanford.edu/news/why-san-francisco-state%E2%80%99s-worst-county-black-student-achievement>

³⁷ Anti Displacement Coalition (2015). *San Francisco's Eviction Crisis*
<https://sfadc.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/final-draft-4-20-sm.pdf>

WHEREAS, the economic insecurity from the racial wealth gap in San Francisco impacts educational attainment and, subsequently, the earning potential and generational wealth building of Black families³⁸; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco ranks as the county with the worst academic outcomes for Black students in California, with only 19% of Black students in the city passing the state's reading assessment in 2017³⁹; and

WHEREAS, research shows that these poor educational outcomes are setting up Black children in San Francisco for low earning jobs and subsequently limiting their ability to build wealth; and

WHEREAS, schools police and criminalize Black children, who made up 39% of all students arrested on San Francisco school campuses from 2010 to 2013, despite being only 8% of San Francisco students⁴⁰; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission recognizes anti-Black racism as a human rights and public health crisis with particularly impacts on the civil rights, health and wellbeing of Black individuals, Black families and the Black community; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission requests that the City and County of San Francisco's agencies assert that anti-Black racism is a human rights and public health crisis affecting our entire community; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission urges the San Francisco Health Commission to adopt a resolution declaring that anti-Black racism is a human rights and public health crisis affecting our entire community; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission urges the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to adopt a resolution declaring that anti-Black racism is a human rights and public health crisis affecting our entire community; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission requests that CCSF agencies work with the Office of Racial Equity to disaggregate all data by race and prioritize racial equity in all programs; train employees to understand anti-Black racism and how it affects individual and population health; acknowledge their complicity in these racist outcomes; work with, and center the Black community to dismantle institutionalized, anti-Black racism; commit to review all portions of codified ordinances with a racial equity lens; commit to conduct all human resources, vendor selection and grant management activities with a racial equity lens, including reviewing

³⁸ Hamilton, D., & Darity, W. A. (2017). The political economy of education, financial literacy, and the racial wealth gap.

³⁹ <https://caaspp.cde.ca.gov/sb2017/CompareSearch?lstTestYear=2017>

⁴⁰ Coleman Advocates (2014). <http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/2014/01/14/san-francisco-schools-target-arrests/>

all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments and funding; advocate for and support local, state, regional, and federal anti-racist policies that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism in order to improve the lives of Black people; require community partners and stakeholders in the education, economic development, employment, housing, and criminal justice and safety arenas to recognize anti-Black racism as a public health crisis and to activate the above items; secure adequate resources to successfully accomplish the above activities; and create an anti-Black racism program evaluation framework for all City departments and City grantees where the data must be produced at least every 2 years for the public as instructed by the legislation that created the Office of Racial Equity.

I hereby certify that at the San Francisco Human Rights Commission at its meeting of June 25, 2020 adopted the foregoing resolution.

Cathy Mulkey-Meyer
Human Rights Commission Secretary