2021 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 8

February 18, 2021 - Introduced by Representatives STUBBS, DRAKE, SHELTON, HEBL, MILROY, ANDRACA, SNODGRASS, NEUBAUER, ORTIZ-VELEZ, S. RODRIGUEZ, CABRERA, SINICKI, GOYKE, CONLEY, HAYWOOD, CONSIDINE, SPREITZER, EMERSON, BILLINGS, VINING, BALDEH, SUBECK, ANDERSON, HONG, SHANKLAND, HESSELBEIN, BOWEN, L. MYERS, BROSTOFF and HINTZ, cosponsored by Senators JOHNSON, CARPENTER, WIRCH, L. TAYLOR, ROYS, BEWLEY, ERPENBACH and LARSON. Referred to Committee on Rules.

Relating to: proclaiming that racism and racial inequity constitute a health crisis in Wisconsin.

Whereas, race is a social construct with no biological basis; and

Whereas, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism, which is internalized or interpersonal, and systemic racism, which is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

Whereas, systemic racism unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

Whereas, racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, transportation, and criminal justice; and

Whereas, Black unemployment rates are consistently double or triple those of white workers in Wisconsin regardless of overall economic conditions, and Black median incomes lag far behind those of white households; and
Whereas, Wisconsin’s racial disparity in high school graduation is the worst in the nation; and

Whereas, Black or African–American people constitute less than 7 percent of state residents but 29 percent of people in jail and 41 percent of people in prison; and

Whereas, Wisconsin’s Black families are 5.3 times more likely than white families to live in poverty; and

Whereas, of 44 states for which data was available, Wisconsin ranked 41st in child well-being for Black children and showed the largest gap in well-being among those states between Black children and white children; and

Whereas, in Wisconsin, Black people are 1.8 times more likely than white people to go without health insurance; and

Whereas, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services determined that Black people and Native Americans have the highest excess death rates at every stage in the life course, and the infant mortality rate of non–Hispanic Black infants is the highest in the nation; and

Whereas, the infant mortality rate for infants of non–Hispanic Black women is the highest in the nation; and

Whereas, an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a social determinant of health; and

Whereas, the promotion of healthy communities is directly related to the health of individuals and encourages expanding public health support networks to decrease racial disparities in health outcomes; and

Whereas, communities of color are disproportionally impacted by social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to lead, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike, or run, and inadequate health education; and
Whereas, the people of Wisconsin are committed to continuing to use a racial equity and social justice lens and approach in our policies, procedures, and projects in order to create a robustly anti-racist government and to dismantle institutional structural racism that causes the many harms to our community and society, including grave and long-term harm to individual and public health; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the legislature acknowledges that racism is a public health crisis threatening the long-term individual and population health of large numbers of people in society; and

Be it further resolved, That the legislature commits to its past, current, and future efforts to confront, condemn, and dismantle racism, to inform public discourse on racism, and to continue to implement equitable and anti-racist policies and practices to create a justice- and equity-oriented country and society; and

Be it further resolved, That the legislature commits to continue to support the health and racial equity work of the Department of Health Services, local departments of health, and local departments, agencies, and organizations devoted to promoting public health and racial equity.

(END)