

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-21-06

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC ACTION ON SYSTEMATIC RACISM

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) is committed to empowerment and justice for the African American in United States which has long been the subject to direct violence, subjugation, and numerous acts of overt and systematic racism;

WHEREAS, according to the Brookings Institution the average white family has roughly 10 times the wealth of the average black family, and white college graduates have over seven times more wealth than black college graduates;

WHEREAS, the hard work of enslaved black Americans has helped build generational wealth for the families that owned those slaves, while black Americans have only increased their percent of national wealth by only one percent (to 1.5%) since 1863 while maintaining the same percent of the population;

WHEREAS, under President Abraham Lincoln, the federal government planned to allocate roughly 400,000 acres of land to former slaves that were now freed, however after his assignation that plan was swiftly abandoned;

WHEREAS, the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance has declared “slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity;”

WHEREAS, Africans forcibly imported into the 13 British colonies that became the United States of America were legally chattel for 246 years, 170 under the U.S. Americans played a significant role in the slave trade, indeed the last slave ship, the *Coltilda* arrived in Mobile Alabama in July 1860, just seven months before the Civil War;

WHEREAS, of the nearly 11 million enslaved Africans, only about 300,000 were brought to what would become the United States of America. Laborers were subjected to brutalization, mutilation, rape, torture, suppression of cultural practices, and routine humiliation, including the breaking up of families, and denied access to education and a nutritious diet;

WHEREAS, their inhumane, unpaid working conditions produced severe illnesses;

WHEREAS, according to the Brookings Institution, the value assigned to enslaved black Americans in 1860 was over 3 billion, which is more than the combined value of money invested in the railroads and factories at the time;

WHEREAS, because slavers scrimped on food and shelter, malnourishment, diarrhea, dysentery, worms, whooping cough, and respiratory diseases were rampant, and these conditions pushed the infant and early childhood death rate of slaves to twice that of white infants and children;

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-21-06

WHEREAS, half of all African American enslaved infants died in their first year;

WHEREAS, African American children continue to be plagued by these problems, for the period, 2013-2016, African American children experienced a death rate from SIDS of 74.4 per thousand compared to White children's 39 per 1000;

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health and Human Services African American infants die at a rate of 11 per thousand compared to White infants' 4.7;

WHEREAS, African American history is replete with horrific atrocities, terrorist lynching, racial pogroms, massacres, and in the contemporary moment heinous hate crimes and police murders;

WHEREAS, The Equal Justice Initiative has documented 4000 lynchings;

WHEREAS, according to the Anti-Defamation League, Black people are the only U.S. racial or ethnic group who are killed by police at a rate greater than their percentage of the population, and between 2016 and 2018, the number of white supremacist murders more than doubled with 2017 being the fifth deadliest year on record for extremist violence against Blacks since 1970;

WHEREAS, African Americans are disproportionately killed by police, although they comprise only 13.4 percent of the U.S. population, from 2015-2019, they accounted for 26.4 percent of individuals killed by police, alternatively Whites make up 50 percent of police killings but compose 61 percent of the population, and Latinx people comprise 18% of both police killings and the U.S. population, while Asians constitute 2 percent of police killings and 5 percent of the population;

WHEREAS, from Emancipation into the 1960s, African American men working the same job as White men earned only two-thirds of their wages;

WHEREAS, the Black-White wage gap expanded with rising wage inequality from 1979 to 2018, and African American women and men reside at the bottom of the wage scale and disproportionately comprise unskilled, non-union, service sector labor;

WHEREAS, according to the US Census Bureau the median wage for black women is just over \$36,000, while white men have a median wage of over \$61,000;

WHEREAS, since the late 19th Century, most African Americans have been in sub-standard housing stock and poor municipal services, according to the Brookings Institute median net worth declined by more for Black families (44.3 percent decline from 2007 to 2013) than for white families (26.1 percent decline);

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-21-06

WHEREAS, African Americans have been kept out of communities or had their communities denied services due to redlining, with Federal Housing Administration even subsidizing the production of suburban housing with the requirement that they not be sold to black Americans;

WHEREAS, the GI Bill that would pay for military veterans to be able to pay for college, however that bill allowed for state implementation and allowed black Americans to be denied the same rights and payments as their white veteran counterparts;

WHEREAS, the mass incarceration of African American males eliminates their right to vote and therefore proves a direct link between racialized policies and the suppression of African American voices in the political process of the United States;

WHEREAS, even with its record of anti-Black racial violence the lynchings of William “Froggie” James, November 11, 1909 in Cairo, Illinois, Jesse Washington, May 16, 1911 in Waco, Texas; and Laura and L.D. Nelson, May 25, 1911 near Okemah, Okfuskee County, Oklahoma, are unacceptable;

WHEREAS, The Wilmington Massacre of 1898 (North Carolina); the 1917 East Louis (Illinois); 1919 Elaine, Arkansas, and 1921 Tulsa (Oklahoma) massacres are absolutely inexcusable;

WHEREAS, in modern times, the savage 1955 lynching of Emmett Till, the atrocious rape of Mary Ruth Reed in Monroe North Carolina in 1959 and monstrous murders of James Byrd Jr, in 1998 in Jasper, Texas and the Charleston Massacre (North Carolina) in 2015 continue to resonate with the public;

WHEREAS, the current wave of protests were ignited by the callous police murder of George Floyd, and was preceded by several others dying at the hands of the police, including Eric Garner, Tamir Rice and Breonna Taylor and the contemporary lynching of Ahmaud Aubrey; and

WHEREAS, the Statement by certain Special Procedures at Human Rights Coalition urgent debate on police violence against people of African descent and peaceful protesters “[African-Americans] in the United States; the domestic legal system has utterly failed to acknowledge and confront racial injustice and discrimination. This injustice and discrimination is so deeply entrenched in law enforcement that even during this period of uprising, reports continue of extrajudicial killings of Black people by the police. This injustice and discrimination also affect other racial and ethnic minorities. Despite several decades of policing reform, executive intervention, and judicial oversight, this violence and racial injustice persists.”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) believes the situation in the United States requires an international support to ensure that people of African descent in this country are no longer subject to the routine and systematic racism;

LAW, JUSTICE, AND ETHICS

Resolution LJE-21-06

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL believes the racism that exists requires international support and leadership to acknowledge the grave violations of the past and fix the systematically flawed systems that are entrenched and support racism;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls on the United Nations to take immediate action to put end to systematic racism in the United States and other member countries as it is a threat that must be considered a priority;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL believes that the United Nations should look at substantive punishments for countries including the United States that do not make progress on systematic racism;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL believe that Black Americans are owed restitution and reparations for the grave injustices suffered;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges Congress to have US Department of the Treasury with the assistance of other federal departments to do full accounting of the all the benefits that were promised to Black Americans that were never received and the cost that systematic injustice has had on the community;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges that Congress also work with the various federal departments to develop a plan to distribute these funds to Black Americans in an equitable manner that appropriately aids the most vulnerable members to create generational wealth; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the Unites States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative Carol Ammons (IL)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Law, Justice, and Ethics Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Chair: Representative Reginald Meeks (KY)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2020

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President