

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (BED)

Resolution BED-22-47

ELIMINATING HEALTH CARE, FOOD, AND CREDIT DESERTS

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) has a long history of creating policy to end disparities that have plagued communities of color, including passage of resolution AGR-14-46, “A Resolution Advocating the Elimination of Food Deserts”;

WHEREAS, the challenge faced by minority and low- and moderate-income communities is not the availability of unhealthy fast food as much as it is the lack of access to healthy alternatives;

WHEREAS, according to 2014 study from Johns Hopkins University comparing census tracts of similar poverty levels found that Black communities had the fewest supermarkets, white communities had the most, and multiracial communities were in the middle;

WHEREAS, it is not the availability certain healthcare resources as much as it is the lack of access to quality healthcare;

WHEREAS, in Maryland, African Americans make up 31% of the population, but accounted for 52% of the death from COVID-19 according to the Washington Post;

WHEREAS, it is not the availability of financial resources as much as it is the lack of access to resources that help the community to build good credit;

WHEREAS, according to a study by Morgan State University “financially at-risk conditions (e.g., lack of financial institutions, marked presence of predatory lenders, few businesses) exist in the aggregate, forming concentrated zones that are more likely located in communities that are home to people of color, those less educated and those of low economic means”; and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to enact a national and state plans to address the availability and equitable distribution of critical resources in all fifty states and territories.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State (NBCSL) work with a variety of partners including the Equitable Growth Fund to identify and address health care, food, and credit deserts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL will study and develop model legislation that uses data to identify and address these deserts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL believes that a data-centric approach to address social justice issues is needed to manage both government resources and identify where private resources need to be developed;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges the development and implementation of state and community-based programs to support initiatives aimed at reducing health care, food, and financial disparities, to bring healthier options into underserved communities across America; 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 United 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 Sonya Harper (IL)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Business and Economic Development (BED) Policy Committee

Ratified in Plenary Session: December 2, 2021

Ratification certified by: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA), NBCSL President