

November 10, 2020

**Mike Pettit**  
Assistant County Executive Officer

**Kaye Mand**  
County Chief Financial Officer

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, California 93009

**Shawn Atin**  
Assistant County Executive Officer/  
Human Resources Director  
Labor Relations

**Subject: Approval of a Resolution of The Board of Supervisors of the County of Ventura Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis and Pledging to Promote Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in Housing, Employment, Economic Development, Health Care, and Public Safety in the County of Ventura and Endorsing the Work and Direction of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force.**

**Recommendation:**

That your Board approve and adopt the attached Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis and Pledging to Promote Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in Housing, Employment, Economic Development, Health Care, and Public Safety in the County of Ventura and Endorsing the Work and Direction of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The fiscal impact associated with this recommendation is being evaluated.

**Discussion:**

Over this past year, we have witnessed the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others. Their tragic deaths have caused many people to unite in efforts to raise awareness and push for meaningful action that will lead to equitable treatment among all communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought into sharp focus systemic institutional and structural racism that inequitably impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

The attached proposed Resolution is intended as a declaration of racism as a public health crisis and a pledge from your Board to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity in housing, employment, economic development, health care, and public safety. The proposed Resolution also pledges that the County will work to become a more racial equity and justice-oriented organization in service to our community.

The Resolution further discusses working collaboratively with community stakeholders, law and justice agencies, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, health care professionals, and others to address public concerns, review practices and effective allocation of resources.

This will continue and enhance work that is already in progress. In 2016, the County established a CEO Community Engagement Liaison leadership position to support our continued commitment to work with various community organizations, members and advocates regarding county services and programs. In 2017, the County launched the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force comprised of leaders from across County agencies and departments. The Task Force's mission is to enhance and strengthen systems, programs, and learning in the County of Ventura to ensure we have the best practices to work effectively and leverage diversity with all team members, customers, and with the community, and to improve outcomes for community members, deliver culturally responsible services, and maintain successful partnerships with community organizations.

To date, the Task Force has worked to develop and implement mandatory employee cultural competency training, created an online Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Library, created a Mentorship Program, established the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Council, supported creation of a County of Ventura Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer leadership position, and has continued the bilingual incentive premium for County employees to provide services in Spanish and Indigenous languages.

Over the past months, the County has hosted and participated in numerous public and employee forums regarding race and law enforcement. The County Executive Office hosted two employee forums in which approximately 900 County employees participated and has supported the initiative for each County department/agency to hold a forum for their employees.

The Sheriff's Office has also participated in discussions with community organizations including Indivisible Conejo, and the League of United Latin America Citizens (LULAC). In addition, the County of Ventura hosted a community forum with panelists from Black Lawyers of Ventura County, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Public Defender, Ventura County Sheriff, District Attorney, County Executive Officer, and members of the Task Force.

With adoption of this Resolution, your Board will commit to carrying forward the following specific goals: a) to endorse the Task Force's work to review policies and procedures to prevent racism and further develop equity, inclusion, and diversity in County service and incorporating these components in our Strategic Plan; b) to collaborate with community members and law enforcement agencies in establishing an advisory group to foster communication and identify public concerns related to policing policies and procedures; c) to establish a health care working group with community stakeholders to study delivery

and improvement of health care services to underserved populations; d) to incorporate equity, inclusion, and diversity into County organizational practices to guide our employees in best serving our community in a culturally competent manner; e) to advocate for policies that improve the health of our community; and f) to encourage similar resolutions by other governmental entities.

This Resolution is the first step toward recognizing the need to openly acknowledge the existence of racism, that racism has many significant negative consequences, and that change in our institutional systems must occur. Adoption of this Resolution will demonstrate your Board's commitment to lead the needed change in becoming a more racially equitable and justice-oriented organization in service to all communities within our county.

This Board letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel. If you have any questions, please contact Rigoberto Vargas, Public Health Director at (805) 981-5101.

Respectfully,



RIGOBERTO VARGAS  
Public Health Director



MICHAEL POWERS  
County Executive Officer

c: Jeffery S. Burgh, Auditor-Controller  
Michael G. Walker, County Counsel  
William T. Foley, Health Care Agency Director  
Mike Pettit, Assistant County Executive Officer  
Kaye Mand, Assistant County Executive Officer/Chief Financial Officer  
Shawn Atin, Assistant County Executive Officer/Human Resources Director

Attachment: Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis and Pledging to Promote Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in Housing, Employment, Economic Development, Health Care, and Public Safety in the County of Ventura