



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: 1st & 2nd District
Supervisor
Department No.: 011 – Board of Supervisors
For Agenda Of: April 6, 2021
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Board Member(s) 1st District Supervisor *Das Williams* and 2nd District Supervisor
Gregg Hart *C.H. on behalf of Gregory Hart*
Contact Info: Darcel Elliott, (805) 568-2186
Ethan Bertand (805) 568-2191

**SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis in Santa
Barbara County**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt the attached Resolution of Concern (Attachment A) about racism as a public health crisis that results in widespread inequities across health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development, public safety, criminal justice, and housing in Santa Barbara County;
- b) Determine that the recommended actions do not constitute a project subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), finding that the project is an organizational or administrative activity of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

The attached resolution declares the County of Santa Barbara’s concern regarding racism as a public health crisis that results in widespread inequities across health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development, public safety, criminal justice, and housing.

Background:

Systemic and structural racism has resulted in the development of systems and institutions, including those within government, that perpetuate inequities through policies and procedures. This has always been true and yet there has been an increased attention, focus, and commitment to changing these systems since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One particular event that sparked a renewed focus on systemic and structural racism was the killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers on May 25, 2020. This murder occurred within weeks of other tragic, high-profile deaths of Black Americans, including Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery. Following these events, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors held its first ever hearing on racial equity and the criminal justice system on June 11, 2020, with two subsequent hearings on July 16th and December 1st. The work being done in this context has demonstrated that Latinx and Black members of our community are overrepresented in our jail as compared to their representation in our county population at-large.

In addition to this violence, the COVID-19 pandemic has also brought a substantial increase in hate crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University has found that hate crimes against AAPI individuals increased 149% from 2019 to 2020. The Atlanta Spa Shootings, which occurred on March 16, 2021 and resulted in the deaths of eight individuals – including six Asian women, has brought larger awareness to the overall increase in hate crimes against AAPI individuals.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the significant disparities that exist in health outcomes, both nationwide and in our county. Locally, our Santa Barbara County Public Health Department statistics show that members of the Hispanic/Latinx community are overrepresented in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths compared to their representation in the county population as a whole. It is appropriate at this time that the Board of Supervisors continue the work that it has undertaken to address racial inequities that exist throughout our county by passing a resolution declaring racism is a public health crisis that results in widespread inequities across health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development, public safety,

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

N/A

Key Contract Risks:

N/A

Staffing Impacts:

N/A

Legal Positions: N/A

FTEs: N/A

Special Instructions:

Attachments:

(A) Resolution of Concern Regarding Racism as a Public Health Crisis in Santa Barbara County

Authored by:

Darcel Elliott and Ethan Bertrand