

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS JACKSON AREA**  
**Resolution to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis**  
**September 2020**

This resolution was adopted by LWVJA Board of Directors via Zoom electronic vote on  
September 14, 2020.

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS) mourns those who have lost their lives or been harmed, mentally or physically, as a result of American's pervasive culture of antiblackness and believes the systems of oppression that have perpetuated the myth of white supremacy in our country must be dismantled if we are ever to become the nation we pledge to be—indivisible, with liberty and justice for all;

WHEREAS, the mission of LWVUS is to empower voters and defend democracy, we stand in solidarity with all Black communities by speaking out against racism in all form and by doing the work required of us to be anti-racist;

WHEREAS, the LWVUS is committed to listening to and amplifying Black voices and educating ourselves and our children on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country;

WHEREAS, the LWVUS acknowledges, painfully, that American is a nation founded on racism and therefore, all who live in this country must contribute to and participate in organizations actively working to achieve full liberation and inclusive freedom;

WHEREAS, RACE is a social construct with no biological basis; RACISM is a social system with multiple dimensions, including individual racism which is internalized or interpersonal and SYSTEMATIC RACISM, which is institutional or structural; RACISM is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; SYSTEMATIC RACISM, while generally not understood, unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and depletes the strength of the whole society;

WHEREAS, racism is rooted in the foundation of America. From the time chattel slavery began in the 1600's, to the Jim Crow era, to the declaration of the war on drugs that eventually led to mass incarceration, racism has remained a presence in American society;

WHEREAS, historical racism in America has detrimentally impacted Black and other non-White Americans across the nation;

WHEREAS, racism, including implicit and conscious bias, causes persistent racial discrimination in Criminal Justice, Social Capital, Voter Suppression, Education, Transportation, Employment, Food Access, Mental Health and Health Behaviors, Socioeconomic Status, Environmental Exposure, Access to Health Services, Housing, and Public Safety;

WHEREAS, racism has caused many ethnic groups to endure hardships not generally endured by Whites in the United States;

WHEREAS, in more recent years, discriminatory housing practices used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, known as redlining, along with the deed restrictions, have prohibited non-White people from living in certain parts of cities and neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, while the poverty rate in Michigan for Whites in 2018 was 11%, poverty rates for non-Whites ranged from 13% to 27% (Asian/Pacific Islanders, 13%; Native Americans 24%; Hispanics 20% and Blacks 27%);

WHEREAS, more Black babies die before their first birthday than babies of any other race. In 2017, the infant mortality rate for Black babies was more than twice the rate among Asian, White, and Hispanic babies;

WHEREAS, the preponderance of research suggests that the history of racism has had a lasting detrimental impact on the educational outcomes of non-White students through curriculum, discipline and classroom climate;

WHEREAS, racism has been determined to be a social detriment of health inequities through its direct psychological impact on individual and population health, as well as indirectly through its impact on educational, socio-economic and other social structures which can lead to negative long-term outcomes;

WHEREAS, it is the intent of LWVJA to condemn all forms of racism as well as discrimination, to promote fair and equitable policies in regard to all citizens, and advocate for anti-racist policies at every level of government.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED: LWVJA hereby declares that racism is a public health crisis that adversely impacts our children, our families, our community and our county.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: LWVJA hereby officially condemns all acts of discrimination and racism and formally states that any form of discrimination or racism is unacceptable in our county, as it is a detriment to an inclusive county.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: LWVJA supports the appointment, through the standard application and appointment process, a seven member sub-committee comprised of three Commissioners and four Jackson County residents to develop a racial equity policy to be presented for consideration for adoption by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and to be implemented thereafter by the Jackson County Administrator.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: LWVJA directs its representative to forward a copy of this resolution to the County elected officials, the Michigan State Legislature representatives from Jackson County (State House of Representatives and State Senators), the Governor of Michigan and all the Michigan U.S. Congressmen and Senators from Jackson County.

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