

The following Resolution was adopted by the full Democratic National Committee at its meeting on February 16, 2019, in Washington, DC.

Submitted by: Travis Nelson, Oregon  
 Virgie Rollins, National Federation of Democratic Women/Michigan  
 Matt Keating, Oregon  
 Jeanne Atkins, Chair, Oregon  
 Allison Stephens, Nevada  
 Mark Mallory, Ohio  
 Khary Penebaker, Wisconsin  
 Christine Pelosi, California  
 Tanya Shively, Oregon  
 Michael Kapp, California  
 Maya Rockey Moore Cummings, Chair, Maryland  
 Valdez Bravo, Oregon  
 John Verdejo, North Carolina  
 Adrienne George, Democrats Abroad

---

***Resolution Calling on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to Name Racism as a Threat to Public Health***

**WHEREAS**, the Democratic Party platform provides: “Democrats will fight to end institutional and systemic racism in our society. We will challenge and dismantle the structures that define lasting racial, economic, political, and social inequity. Democrats will promote racial justice through fair, just, and equitable governing of all public-serving institutions and in the formation of public policy. Democrats support removing the Confederate battle flag from public properties, recognizing that it is a symbol of our nation’s racist past that has no place in our present or our future. We will push for a societal transformation to make it clear that black lives matter and that there is no place for racism in our country”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has determined that a protocol for addressing a threat to public health is based on a finding that all four of their factors, namely, that the behavior is 1) a burden on the culture; 2) the behavior is disproportionately shared by a sector of the population; 3) there is evidence that upstream change will have an impact and 4) that current measures are insufficient;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, “Racism is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call ‘race’), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources,” former American Public Health Association (APHA) President Camara Jones, MD, PhD, MPH said in an APHA internet article on Racism and Health; and

**WHEREAS**, as set forth in the aforementioned article on Racism and Health, “Racism may be intentional or unintentional. It operates at various levels in society. Racism is a driving force of the societal determinants of health (like housing, education, and employment) and is a barrier to health equity.”; and

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1563984/>;  
[https://www.cdCgov/pcd/issues/2006/apr/pdf/05\\_0105.pdf](https://www.cdCgov/pcd/issues/2006/apr/pdf/05_0105.pdf)

**WHEREAS**, as pointed out by Jacqueline Howard, a CNN correspondent, in her report on the August 15, 2017 deadly act that occurred during a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, at least four medical groups call hate crimes a public health concern. After Charlottesville, the American College of Physicians posted on its website: “Hate crimes directed at individuals based on their race, ethnic origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, nationality, primary language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, cultural background, age disability, or religion are a public health issue.” The American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Family Physicians also have issued statements on hate crimes as a public health concern; and

**WHEREAS**, Howard reported that “several studies suggest that experiences of racism or discrimination raise the risk of emotional and physical health problems, including depression, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and even death”; and

**WHEREAS**, another area where elements of systemic racism can be found is in our criminal justice system. As recognized by the Democratic Party platform, “We will end racial profiling that targets individuals solely on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin, which is un-American and counterproductive. We should report national data on policing strategies and provide greater transparency and accountability.” and

**WHEREAS**, it follows that racism and discriminatory treatment that can occur in the criminal justice system as noted above is likewise a barrier to health equity whether by creating higher levels of stress and chronic illnesses, depriving one of the economic abilities to have access to health care, and/or interfacing with a medical community unprepared to deal with the effects of racism; and

**WHEREAS**, the APHA Presidential Initiative, a national campaign against racism “... aims to identify all areas in which racism exists and operates and to take swift and practical steps toward health equity through its elimination. The goals are to:

*Put racism on the agenda.* Name racism as a force determining the societal determinants of health.

*Ask ‘How is racism operating here?’* Identify how racism drives past and current policies, practices, norms, and values that create inequitable conditions in which we are born, grow, live, learn, and age.

*Organize and strategize to act.* Promote and facilitate conversations, research and invention to address racism and its negative impact on the health of our nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the above recitals clearly demonstrate findings that racism is a burden on our culture, is disproportionately shared by sectors of our population, current measures are insufficient, and that there are initiative goals that that can affect upstream changes beginning with putting racism on the agenda as a public health threat;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Democratic National Committee calls on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to declare racism a threat to public health by the CDC’s criteria and all due diligence be undertaken to address it; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that people of color be included in the discussions, specific work and decision-making processes involved in identifying the causes, consequences and solutions in the effects of racial inequality on one’s health and evaluate efficacy on a regular basis to be determined with those communities.