



**Portage County Democratic Party
Resolution 2020-01**

Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions – individual racism that is internalized or interpersonal and systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and

WHEREAS, race is a social construct with no biological basis; and

WHEREAS, racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources; and

WHEREAS, systemic racism is a root cause of poverty and constricts economic mobility, negatively impacting health care, criminal justice, education, housing, employment, food and nutrition and many more issues that determine health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, at this critical inflection point in American history, African Americans are confronting two crises – the coronavirus pandemic and police violence – that are disproportionately impacting their community and bringing racial injustice to the forefront with peaceful demonstrations in cities and small towns in Portage County, every state in the Union, and around the globe; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association and American College of Physicians have all stated that racism is a public health issue and condemned police violence; and

WHEREAS, Black babies die at more than twice the rate of white babies in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Black women account for 17 percent of Ohioans giving birth, but represent 34 percent of pregnancy-related deaths in the state; and

WHEREAS, Black Ohioans have an average life expectancy that is several years less than white Ohioans; and

WHEREAS, predominantly Black communities in Portage County have been identified as recently as the 1970s as some of the most racially unequal and ghettoized in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Democratic and Black community leaders in Portage County have repeatedly called attention to these inequities and demanded action; and

WHEREAS, Ohio Congresswoman Joyce Beatty has offered a resolution recognizing racism as a public health crisis at the national level and calling for a process of truth and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus has introduced legislation that would declare racism a public health crisis in the state of Ohio; and

WHEREAS, communities throughout our state and County have considered or will consider resolutions declaring racism to be a public health crisis;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Portage County Democratic Party Central Committee recognizes that structural and systemic racism are embedded and entrenched in every aspect of our nation, declares unequivocally that racism is a public health crisis in our community, and calls on local, state, and national leaders to join us in our declaration and enact substantive policies that move our communities toward equity and justice.

Approved August 13, 2020

Dean DePerro, Chair

Cindy M. Greene, Secretary