



## BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Equity and Structure

Bill 20-0218R

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### Recognizing Systemic Racism as a Public Health Crisis

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*Sponsor: Councilmember Robert Stokes*

*Introduced: November 16, 2020*

**Purpose:**

For the purpose recognizing systemic racism as a public health crisis.

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### Agency Reports

Office of Equity and Civil Rights	
Dept. of Transportation	
Baltimore City Public School System	
Balto. City States Attorney's Office	
Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Office	
Housing and Community Development	Favorable
Law Department	Favorable
Dept. of Planning	
Police Department	
Dept. of Recreation and Parks	Favorable

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## Analysis

### Background

The National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) Foundation sites systemic racism as the way policies and practices of an organization or system advantage some populations, while disadvantaging others, creating different outcomes for different racial groups. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have declared that health is determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities, and that the conditions in which we live affect why the health outcomes of some Americans are better than those of others.

### Understanding Race, Racism, and Wealth

Although slavery and Jim Crow ended generations ago, the legacy that those policies and practices had on black people live on in various forms of systemic and structural racism today. Whether it is the barriers that have been created to deprive black people and members of other minority groups from having equal access to healthcare, housing, public safety, nutritional food, education, transportation, employment, and most importantly economic stability. But contrary to the popular notion about the concept of race, it is more than a biological grouping. Race is about financial, political and social currencies, and it can be categorized as a form of stored wealth and power. Knowing the origin and nature of the value of race is essential to any analysis conducted on “racism”. It is important that any group that has been the victim of racism, particularly black people, know why the race problem refuses to die and how it is used to keep them a non-competitive and powerless group.

The word “race” first appeared with the emergence of the slave practice in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Records indicate the word race was selected because the various European slave-trading nations were in a contest, competing to profit from the mineral and human wealth of Africa. The prize for winning the race was the power to develop western civilization, using the wealth extracted out of Africa. Black people were non-competitors in the race, because they were the prizes, so they could neither play nor win.

### The Effects of Systemic Racism Today

Information from the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation provided the following data relating to Systemic Racism and the impacts on health:

- **Wealth** – The net worth of a typical white family is ten times greater than that of a black family.
- **Food Insecurity** – Black Americans are two times more likely to face hunger than their white peers.
- **Housing Insecurity** – Black Americans make up forty percent of the homeless population.
- **Education** – Forty percent of black students receive a four-year degree versus sixty-four percent of white students.
- **Mass Incarceration** – Black Americans are incarcerated at more than five-times the rate of white Americans.
- **Maternal Mortality** – Black women are three to four-times more likely to die giving birth than white women.

- **COVID 19** – Black Americans are dying from this virus at a rate that is 2.4 times higher than any other demographic of people.
- **Physical Health** – Black Americans are 42% more prevalent to suffer from hypertension, 20% more prevalent to suffer from diabetes, and 48% more prevalent to be obese than white Americans.

### **Four Steps to Address Systemic Problems**

- Dismantle structures that support racism
- Deconstruct systems that contribute to wealth inequality
- Expand health care coverage & access
- Address social determinants of health – food, housing & education

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### **Additional Information**

**Fiscal Note:** Not Available

**Information Source(s):** Povernomics, by Dr. Claude Anderson; Agency Reports; Center for Disease Control and Prevention; National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation

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