



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

July 14, 2020

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

TO: Robert J. Williams, Jr.
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt
Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin *JH*
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

FROM: Cassandra Fields *KCF*
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Note
CR-066-2020, Declaring Racism as a Crisis and Disease of Public Health, Public Safety
and Economic Welfare

CB-066-2020 (Sponsored by: Councilmembers Harrison and Hawkins)

Referred to the Committee of the Whole (COW)

A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE DECLARATION OF RACISM AS A CRISIS AND DISEASE OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PUBLIC SAFETY AND ECONOMIC WELFARE for the purpose of asserting that Racism is a Crisis and Disease of Public Health and Public Safety and Economic Welfare because of its effect on the entire Prince George's County community.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: None.

Revenues: None.

Indirect Impact:

Potentially positive.

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
VOICE (301) 952-3431; FAX (301) 780-2097; TDD (301) 925-5167

Legislative Summary:

CR-66-2020, proposed by Councilmembers Harrison and Hawkins will be presented to the County Council on July 14, 2020 and referred to the Committee of the Whole. CR-066-2020 would assert that racism is a public health and safety crisis, that also impacts the economic welfare of the community as a whole.

Current Law/Background:

A 2018 American Public Health Association statement highlighted the fact that a disproportionate number of people of color, particularly Black people, are subjected to police violence each year. Beyond the personal impact each of those encounters have, the abuse takes a toll on community mental well-being, which is directly linked to overall health¹. It further sets forth that racism hurts the health of our nation by preventing some people the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. It operates at various levels in society. Racism is a driving force of the social determinants of health (like housing, education and employment) and is a barrier to health equity².

It has also been found that people of color are significantly more likely to experience lower-quality healthcare, have less access to resources like education, and to experience prejudice in their professional and personal lives. One result of these experiences is stress, which is itself a cause of medical conditions like high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and eye disease¹.

Black patients who contract covid-19 are three times more likely to require admission to hospital because of disease severity. Disproportionately, counties in the United States with a large black population account for nearly 60% of deaths from covid-19 in the country, despite representing only 22% of counties. The vast majority of US states have a disproportionate number of covid-19 cases among black patients. Black patients are less likely to be able to obtain covid-19 tests in a number of major US cities. Many black patients have a lower chance of being put on a ventilator where resources are too limited to treat everyone, based on biased algorithms that account for comorbidities and life expectancy. For black patients, even the decision to wear a mask requires them to weigh the risk of being targeted or even killed by law enforcement, versus getting covid-19.³

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 others⁴.

¹ <https://www.popsoci.com/story/health/racism-public-health/>

² <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>

³ <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/06/05/there-is-no-stopping-covid-19-without-stopping-racism/>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

The Council commits to promoting racial equity and social justice through all policies approved by the Council and educating and training Council staff on how racism and other systems of oppression can affect health care, the delivery of human and social services, economic development and public safety.

The proposed legislation declares that **racism is a public health crisis** and would commit to creating meaningful systemic reforms to effectuate deliberate change to the Racism inherent in the numerous health, public safety, educational, housing and economic systems.

CR-66-2020 would establish a **Racial Equity Task Force** to address structural Racism within the County, in an effort to establish realizable equity for health, peace, economic enrichment, and justice for all persons within the community, with careful consideration and emphasis for communities of color.

As proposed, the Council will commit to **review and create legislation and policy to bolster an equitable community** free from unfair, bias and race-based practices including, but not limited to, educational opportunities, housing, hiring and promotional opportunities, access and delivery to health care, predatory lending, delivery of law enforcement and judicial services, environmental impact, economic expansion, nutritious food accessibility, and recreation and leisure services.

CR-66-2020 would promote the **focus on the mental health** of County public safety officials and residents, with an emphasis on finding support for persons in mental crisis and avoiding the criminalization of substance addiction.

As presented, it would establish a position of **support for incarceration diversion processes** and programs.

The County Council would **support policies and programs rooted in trauma-informed care**, thereby reducing trauma, deescalating mental health crises, facilitating appropriate access to health care and responding to community-based-calls-for-service.

CR-66-2020 seeks to support a **comprehensive and thorough review of public safety recruitment and training processes** to ensure the County employs the most advanced institutionalized training practices. It also promotes the creation of the **“law enforcement officers’ use-of-force registry/database”** allowing for more transparency of individual officers’ prior history and outcomes.

The proposed legislation expresses support of the **creation of a use-of-force oversight body** to oversee, monitor, and investigate all complaints.

It expresses support for a **County public safety Leadership Mentoring Program** that would assist with training and development of future managers, by fostering fair, unbiased standardized access to promotional opportunities and training.

Lastly, CR-66-2020 expressly supports **banning chokeholds and strangleholds**, while supporting **policies of de-escalation and exhaustion of all alternatives prior to discharging weapons**. It would also seek to ban shooting at moving vehicles.

Fiscal Impact:

Direct Impact

Adoption of CR-066-2020 should have minimal to no adverse financial impact on the County.

Indirect Impact

Adoption of CR-066-2020 should not have an adverse indirect fiscal impact on the County. When and if the Racial Equity Task Force is ultimately created, there could be some minimal costs incurred as a result of technical and administrative support.

It would be prudent to give future consideration of costs associated with revisions to training practices, certain policy and legislative initiatives set forth in the proposed resolution, and database expenditures. In some instances, future federal funding could be contingent upon implementing these enhanced processes and procedures.

Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget

No.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation

The proposed Resolution shall be effective on the date of adoption.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please call me.