

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2020 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CR-066-2020

Draft No.: 1

Committee: Committee of the Whole

Date: 7/14/2020

Action: FAV

REPORT: Favorable 11-0: Council Members Turner, Anderson-Walker, Davis, Dernoga, Franklin, Glaros, Harrison, Hawkins, Ivey, Streeter and Taveras

CR-066-2020 is a Resolution Concerning the Declaration of Racism as a Crisis and Disease of Public Health, Public Safety and Economic Welfare. This Resolution was introduced on July 14th and referred to the Committee of the Whole. The purpose of the Resolution is to assert that Racism is a Crisis and Disease to Public Health, Public Safety and the Economic Welfare due to its impact on the entire Prince George's County community.

Council Member Harrison a co-proposer urged the Council to create meaningful protocols and safeguards to ensure the community bridges the racial equity gap. Council member Hawkins, a co-proposer stated that the Resolution is a response to the national crisis and countywide call to dismantle systemic racism. He went on to note that, we must take additional steps to create equity for all.

- The proposed legislation declares that racism is a public health crisis.
- Proposes the establishment of a Racial Equity Task Force.
- Encourages the Council to review and create legislation and policy to bolster an equitable community.
- Focuses on mental health.
- Support for incarceration diversion processes and programs.
- Support policies and programs rooted in trauma-informed care.
- Support a comprehensive and thorough review of public safety recruitment and training processes.
- Support a law enforcement officers use of force oversight body to oversee, monitor and investigate all use-of-force complaints in Prince George's County.
- Create a County Public Safety Leadership Mentoring Program.
- Support policies Banning chokeholds and strangleholds.
- Support polices of de-escalation and exhaustion of alternative prior to discharging weapons.

Community member Amity Pope thanked Council Members Hawkins and Harrison for sponsoring the Resolution and spoke in support. Examples were given of positive impacts that she envisions the legislation addressing and technical amendments were suggested on, line 7 page 2 to add systemic prior to racism, and on line 22 adding a comma after racism.

Council Member Anderson Walker expressed support but cautioned that racism classified as a disease

could encourage frivolous legal action and misuse.

Council Member Davis thanked the sponsors for their leadership and hard work getting this far and for the comprehensive approach. Drawing on experience in leadership at Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments he noted that jurisdictions across this region are making these types of statements. He also made the statement, "Considering we are a majority minority jurisdiction Where else if not here?" The liberation conversation was started recently in Montgomery County, but we are liberated. When this is all tied together it is a powerful statement.

Council Member Franklin inquired whether consideration was given to creating the authority to assemble the task force through this Resolution. An additional piece of legislation will be brought forward that will create the workgroup.

Council Chair Turner noted that we have been doing some of these things through other groups and we are continuing to review the most efficient way to accomplish the goals. The corrections suggested by Ms. Pope are technical and will be incorporated in the Resolution without amendment. The County Executive is in support of CR-066-2020.

The Office of Audits and Investigations, Policy Analysis Group, found the adoption of CR-066-2020 should have minimal to no adverse fiscal impact on the County.

The Office of Law found CR-066-2020 to be in proper legislative form with no legal impediments to its adoption.

After discussion the Council voted, favorably on CR-066-2020, 11-0.