WHEREAS, the American Medical Association states that racism contributes to health inequities in the United States; and

WHEREAS, social determinants of health, defined as the social and material factors that influence health outcomes, have a lifelong impact beginning even before birth; and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association has declared racism a driving force of the social determinants of health due to the resulting inequalities in a number of matters, including housing, education, and employment; and

WHEREAS, a past president of the American Public Health Association has defined racism as "a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks . . . 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"; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans have been subjected to two hundred fifty years of slavery, one hundred years of legalized segregation and racial terrorism, and decades of racist housing policy in which they were denied the opportunity to accumulate wealth through home ownership; and

WHEREAS, this history of racial terrorism and racist policy impacts current outcomes regarding access to nutritious food, economic security, educational achievement, and infant mortality; and
WHEREAS, the American Psychological Association notes that ethnic and racial minority children who live in low-income communities experience more stressful or traumatic events, which can lead to mental health difficulties later in life; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has consistently documented a significant disparity between Black and White infant mortality rates; and

WHEREAS, maternal mortality in Missouri is nearly three times greater for Black women than White women; and

WHEREAS, significant racial disparities in life expectancy have also been documented in Missouri; and

WHEREAS, the impact of racism on public health deserves action from all levels of government:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the House of Representatives of the One Hundred First General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate concurring therein, hereby declare racism a public health crisis and urge the Governor to take action that will encourage racial equity in Missouri by working with groups such as Forward through Ferguson, the Deaconess Foundation, and the St. Louis Integrated Health Network; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for Governor Michael L. Parson.