

REFERENCE TITLE: racism; public health crisis

State of Arizona  
Senate  
Fifty-sixth Legislature  
First Regular Session  
2023

## **SCR 1028**

Introduced by  
Senators Mendez: Diaz, Gonzales, Hatathlie, Hernandez, Sundareshan;  
Representative Salman

### A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

PROCLAIMING RACISM TO BE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND AFFIRMING A COMMITMENT  
TO END RACISM AND IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1           Whereas, race is a social construction with no biological basis; and  
2           Whereas, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions.  
3 Individual racism is internalized or interpersonal, while systemic racism  
4 is institutional and structures opportunity and assigns value based on the  
5 social interpretation of how one looks that unfairly disadvantages some  
6 individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and  
7 communities and saps the strength of the whole society by wasting human  
8 resources; and

9           Whereas, racism causes persistent racial discrimination in housing,  
10 education, employment and criminal justice; and

11           Whereas, Phoenix Police Department records show that between 2010  
12 and 2015, Black Arizonans accounted for a disproportionate share of  
13 incidents where officers used hands, fists, choke holds or weapons during  
14 encounters; and

15           Whereas, an emerging body of research demonstrates that racism is a  
16 social determinant of health, and more than 100 studies have linked racism  
17 to worse health outcomes; and

18           Whereas, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by  
19 social determinants of health, such as increased exposure to environmental  
20 contaminants, poor air quality, lack of safe places to walk, bike or run  
21 and inadequate health education; and

22           Whereas, a wealth of medical research suggests that racism plays an  
23 important role in the fact that African American women are more likely  
24 than any other race to give birth to premature babies; and

25           Whereas, Arizona Department of Health Services data shows that the  
26 infant mortality rate among African Americans in Arizona is significantly  
27 higher than the national average; and

28           Whereas, immigration policies that sanction institutional practices  
29 of discrimination, such as the ethno-racial profiling and mistreatment  
30 sanctioned by Arizona law, are forms of structural racism and everyday  
31 violence; and

32           Whereas, studies suggest that immigration laws that militarize  
33 communities and lead to everyday violence exacerbate racial health  
34 disparities; and

35           Whereas, the American Public Health Association launched a National  
36 Campaign Against Racism; and

37           Whereas, this state's responsibilities to address racism include  
38 reshaping our discourse and agenda so that we all actively engage in  
39 racial justice work; and

40           Whereas, while there is no epidemiologic definition of "crisis," the  
41 health impact of racism clearly rises to one proposed definition: "The  
42 problem must affect large numbers of people, it must threaten health over  
43 the long term and it must require the adoption of largescale solutions."

44 Therefore

1 Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House of  
2 Representatives concurring:

3 1. That the Members of the Legislature proclaim racism to be a  
4 public health crisis affecting our entire society.

5 2. That the Members of the Legislature oppose efforts to prevent  
6 the teaching of accurate history and the discussion of race in classrooms.

7 3. That the Members of the Legislature commit to working to create  
8 equity and justice-oriented governance.

9 4. That the Members of the Legislature commit to developing a work  
10 plan that includes educational efforts to address and dismantle racism,  
11 expand state personnel's understanding of racism and how racism affects  
12 individual and population health and provide tools to assist personnel to  
13 engage actively and authentically with communities of color.

14 5. That the Members of the Legislature support policies that  
15 improve health in communities of color and local, state and federal  
16 initiatives that advance social justice.