

1 A RESOLUTION recognizing the value of history as a tool to help ensure a
2 positive and beneficial future for all citizens.

3 WHEREAS, since before its founding, the United States of America has benefited
4 from and been enhanced by the integral role Black Americans have played in our
5 country's history and contributions to the world; and

6 WHEREAS, Black history does not begin in the Americas. It can be traced back to
7 the great empires of West Africa beginning in A.D. 790, which aided the establishment
8 and survival of colonies in America and the New World, generally, and fought against
9 European oppression; and

10 WHEREAS, Black Americans have represented a significant portion of the
11 American population, constituting nearly 20 percent at the time of the signing of the
12 Declaration of Independence, almost all of whom, if not all, were victims of the largest
13 forced deportation in recorded history, the transatlantic slave trade and resulting African
14 diaspora. It is estimated over 10,000,000 free Africans were enslaved between the mid-
15 fifteenth and nineteenth centuries during the diaspora; and

16 WHEREAS, Black Americans continue to fight discrimination, structural racism,
17 economic inequities, and benign and overt omission of the integral role they played in our
18 country's rise to greatness; and

19 WHEREAS, racism has long been and continues to be deeply rooted in our society;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has in the past celebrated racist
22 individuals and institutions and, despite some progress, remains a Commonwealth with
23 more work to do, including eliminating microaggressions and other forms of exclusion
24 consistently endured by Black Kentuckians; and

25 WHEREAS, historic and ongoing structural and systemic barriers in our society
26 prevent Black Americans and communities of color from thriving in our country; and

27 WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of each of us to ensure we understand the

1 history of our own privileges, racism, and biases and the impact of our actions, or lack
2 thereof, on the Black community, Native people, and other communities of color; and

3 WHEREAS, all of those with privileges and power should take full responsibility to
4 continuously work in partnership with communities of color to recognize, examine, and
5 address our own beliefs, biases, and privileges as we reaffirm our values of justice and
6 equity; and

7 WHEREAS, to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past we must hold our leaders
8 accountable to evaluate themselves and the systems over which they have power to
9 actively combat and dismantle racism and oppression in all forms and to embrace unity,
10 build bridges between communities, and heal divisions; and

11 WHEREAS, we all must take a pledge to advance reforms to address years of
12 neglectful and apathetic policies that have led to poor health outcomes for communities
13 of color; and

14 WHEREAS, to help ensure a positive and beneficial future for all citizens, these
15 must not simply be words on a page but must represent enduring structural change and a
16 willingness to dismantle systems that perpetuate racial inequities to create justice for the
17 Black community and all other minority communities; and

18 WHEREAS, we should not accept apathy, indifference, or silence to such ongoing
19 violence and inequities, which otherwise allows hatred, prejudice, and intolerance to
20 fester and grow; and

21 WHEREAS, we must break down our own personal barriers and embrace the need
22 to have uncomfortable talks and real, honest, and transparent conversations directed
23 towards addressing these injustices; and

24 WHEREAS, these actions will allow us to learn from our history, prevent us from
25 repeating the same mistakes, and arm us with the knowledge to create a meaningful
26 impact for all citizens;

27 NOW, THEREFORE,

1 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*
2 *Kentucky:*

3 ➔Section 1. The members of the Senate, individually and collectively, hereby
4 acknowledge that:

5 (1) Racism is an affliction that we must never enable and we should all be active
6 antiracists in taking responsibility to condemn and to end;

7 (2) We need to identify and challenge systemic prejudice wherever it exists, and
8 acknowledge that we are all accountable for doing the work necessary for policy changes
9 that dismantle structural systems of oppression that perpetuate racial inequities in our
10 society;

11 (3) We will strive to be better listeners and supporters of those who are the
12 victims of racism, and that we will never rest until every person feels safe, free, and
13 accepted in our Commonwealth; and

14 (4) We will continuously abide by the goal of providing respect and equal
15 treatment to all in upholding the rule of law.

16 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
17 Resolution to Senator Gerald Neal.