

6 **A RESOLUTION**

8 Calling upon the State of Wisconsin and all Wisconsin counties to make positive policy  
9 changes which will work toward eliminating systemic poverty and inequality

12 WHEREAS, the May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd has reignited the national  
13 conversation on race, poverty, and inequality; and Wisconsin Counties, as arms of the  
14 State of Wisconsin, fulfill many vital State-mandated services and are on the frontlines  
15 in addressing the social ills facing many Wisconsinites; and

17 WHEREAS, the Pew Research Center’s “Race in America 2019” report  
18 uncovered the following statistics regarding racial bias in the United States:

- 20 • Approximately 65 percent of Blacks “say someone has acted suspicious of them  
21 or as if they weren’t smart” compared with 37 percent of Latinos, 34 percent of  
22 Asians, and 25 percent of Whites
- 23 • Approximately 78 percent of Blacks, “say we haven’t gone far enough in giving  
24 blacks equal rights with whites” compared with 37 percent of Whites agreeing
- 25 • Approximately 64 percent of Blacks are pessimistic toward the notion “we will  
26 eventually achieve equality”

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28 ; and

30 WHEREAS, in 2018, in the University of Wisconsin – Madison “Supplement to  
31 the 2016 Wisconsin Poverty Report”, university researchers found:

- 33 • Using the Wisconsin Poverty Measure, in 2016 30.3 percent of Blacks and 18.5  
34 percent of Latinos and other minorities lived in poverty compared to 10 percent of  
35 Whites
- 36 • Overall poverty in Milwaukee County is significantly higher than the rest of  
37 Wisconsin, 17.5 percent versus 10.8 percent in 2016
- 38 • “These data suggest that improving economic and social outcomes for  
39 individuals and families in Milwaukee, especially for blacks, would reduce poverty  
40 rates within the county and overall in the state.”

42 ; and there is a well-established common understanding of the correlation between  
43 poverty, crime, and social achievement; and

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45 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction issued a press  
46 release on October 30, 2019 relating to Wisconsin’s 2019 National Assessment of  
47 Educational Progress (NAEP), noting, “Wisconsin’s scores reflected a wider gap  
48 between the performance of black and white students than any other state or jurisdiction  
49 except one, the District of Columbia.”; and

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51 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County has worked toward addressing the societal ill of  
52 racial inequality by:

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- 54 • Creating the Office of African American Affairs in April 2017 (File No. 16-726)
- 55 • Declaring racism a public health crisis in April 2019 (File No. 19-397)
- 56 • Prioritizing federal Community Development Block Grant dollars toward projects  
57 which improve local community and economic development rather than routine  
58 public works maintenance in April 2019 (File No.19-153)
- 59 • Co-creating the Milwaukee City-County Joint Taskforce on Climate and  
60 Economic Equity in July 2019 (File No. 19-582)
- 61 • Creating Chapter 108 – Achieving Racial Equity and Health in the Milwaukee  
62 County Code of General Ordinances in April 2020 (File No. 20-174)

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64 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Counties Association Board of Directors unanimously  
65 passed the Milwaukee County resolution in File No. 20-576 which called upon the State  
66 of Wisconsin and Wisconsin counties to address systemic racism and inequality on  
67 December 11, 2020; and

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69 WHEREAS, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. once said at the 1963  
70 March on Washington, “We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are,  
71 confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and  
72 history, there ‘is’ such a thing as being too late. There is no time for apathy or  
73 complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action”, and

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75 WHEREAS, the Committee on Finance, at its meeting of June 17, 2021,  
76 recommended adoption of File No. 21-548 (vote 7-0); now, therefore,

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78 BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County calls upon the State of Wisconsin and all  
79 Wisconsin counties to seize the moment to constructively work toward positive change  
80 against systemic racism and inequality through the creation and implementation of  
81 constructive policies addressing inequality; and

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83 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Office of Government Affairs staff are authorized  
84 and directed to provide this resolution to the Wisconsin Counties Association for  
85 consideration in its 2021 Legislative Platform.

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88 06/17/2021

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