



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

NATHAN FLETCHER

SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: June 23, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: FIGHTING FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Recent events in America have sparked difficult and much-needed conversations surrounding race and racism. Many of us were forced to look introspectively and face challenging realities about our own biases. White people in America have unearned privileges that people of color in our nation do not. These privileges present themselves in situations where race becomes a determining factor in access to opportunity and the ability to have access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Addressing these disparities through the lens racial of justice ensures we can begin to change inequities systematically. Racial inequities are prevalent in all communities--in some more than others--that is why a "one size fits all approach" is wrong.

There are clear differences between equity and equality. Equality is giving every person that "one size fits all approach" when they may need more resources, services or access. Equity is analyzing and evaluating the situation, community or individuals and coming up with an approach that will address their most urgent needs in a manner that allows them to be able to have resources, services or access without additional societal barriers put in front of them. We need to address this.

Establishing an Office of Equity and Racial Justice cannot solve all societal problems nor all of the disparities that exist our nation, but it can include people in County government and use their voices to help shape policy and inform budget processes. As we continue to plan our response to, and recovery from, COVID-19, we need to work with all residents in our region to ensure that our County is responding to each community appropriately and addressing their needs. Our County can and should collaborate and work with organizations and agencies to engage with trusted community organizations to ensure that the we can work to establish more equitable programs, services and accessible resources to all.

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I am asking for your support in directing the Chief Administrative Officer to establish an Office of Equity and Racial Justice, identify funding and staff resources to include in the upcoming budget and report back to the Board within 90 days on the structure, scope, roles and responsibilities of the newly established office, including, but not limited to, priorities and budget-making process, manage oversight of Human Relations Commission, collaborate with county departments and the community to streamline and enhance restorative justice practices. It is my belief that if we stay focused on these objectives, we can chip away at existing inequities in our region

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to recommend changes to the budget to establish an Office of Equity and Racial Justice including three full-time employee positions: a Director of the Office of Equity and Racial Justice, two community representatives, and additional staff support, and refer these changes to budget for consideration during the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget deliberations and adoption.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to the Board within 90 days and report back on the overall scope, roles and responsibilities of the Office of Equity and Racial Justice, including, but not limited to:
 - A. Engaging underserved communities and including them in setting County department priorities and budget-making process;
 - B. Administering the duties and responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission by providing staff support and facilitation of related meetings, activities, and membership;
 - C. Ensuring the involvement and participation of people of color in the contract source selection process;
 - D. Collaborating with County departments that administer restorative justice programs to report mutual activities, align best practices, identify barriers and gaps to ensure robust restorative practices throughout our region. And work alongside other jurisdictions in the region that have similar entities to ensure cohesion and avoid duplication of efforts;
 - E. Identifying state and federal grant opportunities to support the expansion of community-based restorative justice programs and activities, and in addition, set aside County funds for this purpose; and
 - F. Creating an outreach and engagement strategy targeting communities of color to ensure equitable application of County COVID-19 recovery efforts and include updates during other COVID-19 reports to the Board.

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FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are not included in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Interim Operational Plan. If approved, Fiscal Year 2020-21 costs and funding required to staff and maintain the functions of the new Office of Equity and Racial Justice are estimated to be \$1.1 million and will be referred to budget for consideration during the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget deliberations and adoption.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Recent events in America have sparked difficult and much-needed conversations surrounding race and racism. Many of us were forced to look introspectively and face challenging realities about our own biases. White people in America have unearned privileges that people of color in our nation do not. These privileges present themselves in situations where race becomes a determining factor in access to opportunity and the ability to have access to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Structural Racism

Structural racism, as defined by the American Bar Association, “is the power used by the dominant group to provide members of the group with advantages, while disadvantaging the nondominant group.” During the Jim Crow era, our own governments created policies to create advantages for white people while creating explicit disadvantages for Black people. These policies have since been repealed, but their spirit has carried far beyond this era.

The Disparities

Statistics on health outcomes, housing stability, job opportunity, poverty and incarcerations show us that the greatest disparities in all of these categories exist by race.

The United States Census Bureau 2019 report on income and poverty shows that Black people in the U.S. had a higher than twice the rate of poverty than white people. The average income for Black people that same year was \$41, 361 compared to \$66, 943 of their white counterparts. These two factors contribute to the lack of access to loans and access to homeownership. Census data also shows that less than 45% of Black people in the U.S. own their homes compared to 75% of whites who own homes.

Pew Research data shows that Black people make up 33% of the prison population but only make up 12% of the overall population. White people make up 64% of the nation’s population and only 33% of the prison population.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, data has shown that people of color are more likely to die of the disease due to longstanding health disparities of Black people with chronic health conditions.

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The United States Census Bureau is obtaining and updating real-time data gathered from households throughout the U.S. to inform policies on COVID-19 response and recovery. This data from the Household Pulse Survey showed that people of color are disproportionately affected and negatively impacted in all areas, including: delayed medical care, housing insecurity, food scarcity and education.

Addressing Racial Justice and Equity

Addressing these disparities through the lens racial of justice ensures we can begin to change inequities systematically. Racial inequities are prevalent in all communities--in some more than others--that is why a “one size fits all approach” is wrong.

There are clear differences between equity and equality. Equality is giving every person that “one size fits all approach” when they may need more resources, services or access. Equity is analyzing and evaluating the situation, community or individuals and coming up with an approach that will address their most urgent needs in a manner that allows them to be able to have resources, services or access without additional societal barriers put in front of them. We need to address this.

Across the nation, government agencies have funded and established their very own Offices of Equity to ensure that these issues are being addressed. These jurisdictions include King County, City of Long Beach, City of Los Angeles, City of Philadelphia, Dane County, Fairfax County, City of Asheville, County of Austin and many more. Now the City of San Diego has prioritized this as part of their budget. These jurisdictions have established these offices to ensure they can begin to address the systemic issues of racial injustice.

These offices allow the respective governments to analyze and strategize around disparities in their departments and social programs using data and research to implement more equitable polices across their agencies. The grant funding associated with these offices allows direct and targeted disbursement into organizations that are tied to the community. Most importantly, they provide a direct connection to the most affected communities and direct communication on the best practices to address structural racism and dismantling barriers for people of color.

Connecting this office with the Human Relations Commission shows commitment to implementation of policies that address discrimination and intolerance and decrease hate crimes, bias, and human rights violations.

Centering the approach on race when looking at County government policies, budget deliberations, contracting and services will ensure that race is not a determining factor in opportunity of access and that race does not present additional obstacles in accessing health, safety and well-being for residents of San Diego County.

Establishing an Office of Equity and Racial Justice cannot solve all societal problems nor all of the disparities that exist our nation, but it can include people in County government and use their voices to help shape policy and inform budget processes. As we continue to plan our response to, and recovery from, COVID-19, we need to work with all residents in our region to ensure that our County is responding to each community appropriately and addressing their needs. Our

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I am asking for your support in directing the Chief Administrative Officer to establish an Office of Equity and Racial Justice, identify funding and staff resources to include in the upcoming budget and report back to the Board within 90 days on the structure, scope, roles and responsibilities of the newly established office, including, but not limited to, priorities and budget-making process, manage oversight of Human Relations Commission, collaborate with county departments and the community to streamline and enhance restorative justice practices. It is my belief that if we stay focused on these objectives, we can chip away at existing inequities in our region

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The requested action supports the Live Well San Diego Initiative in the County's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, and its vision for a San Diego that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving, by supporting and empowering communities of color.

Respectfully submitted,



NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: N/A

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

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