

House Resolution 1550

By: Representatives Gordon of the 163rd, Beasley-Teague of the 65th, Williams of the 168th, Bennett of the 94th, Dickerson of the 113th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging all governing authorities of this state to adopt solutions to address systemic racial
2 inequalities in police use of force and in economic empowerment; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, there is a problem of systemic racial inequalities in policing whereby African
4 Americans and other racial minorities are too often treated differently than white Americans
5 in interactions with police; and

6 WHEREAS, the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health by the Center for Behavioral
7 Health Statistics and Quality of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
8 Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services found that
9 white Americans (9.5 percent) and African Americans (10.5 percent) use illegal drugs at
10 roughly the same rates, and yet the 2013 Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime
11 Reports found that African Americans are much more likely to be arrested for drug related
12 offenses than white Americans; and

13 WHEREAS, *Contacts Between Police and the Public, 2015*, the special report of the Bureau
14 of Justice Statistics of the United States Department of Justice released in October, 2018,
15 found that African Americans were more likely than white Americans and Hispanic
16 Americans to be stopped by police while driving a motor vehicle; and

17 WHEREAS, said special report of the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that African
18 Americans and Hispanic Americans were more likely than white Americans to be subject to
19 a street-stop initiated by police; and

20 WHEREAS, when police initiate an interaction, said special report of the Bureau of Justice
21 Statistics found that police were twice as likely to threaten to use force or to handcuff, push,
22 grab, hit, kick, or use pepper spray or an electroshock weapon against or point a gun at
23 African Americans and Hispanic Americans than white Americans; and

24 WHEREAS, in 2015, African Americans and other racial minorities made up about
25 37.4 percent of the general population in the United States and yet, according to an analysis
26 of 2015 police killings by the *Guardian*, African Americans and other racial minorities made
27 up a staggering 62.7 percent of the unarmed people killed by police in 2015 and nearly
28 50 percent of all people (armed and unarmed) killed by police; and

29 WHEREAS, Black lives matter; and

30 WHEREAS, we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created
31 equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these
32 are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

33 WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this state provide
34 that no persons shall be denied equal protection under the law; and

35 WHEREAS, "Equal Justice Under Law" is engraved on the West Pediment above the
36 entrance of the United States Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., as an
37 acknowledgment of the constitutional principle and American ideal of equality in the
38 enforcement of laws and administration of justice; and

39 WHEREAS, to meet the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, to exercise the
40 guarantees of the constitutions governing this state, and to ensure that all men and women,
41 equally, can encounter agents of this state without feeling an ever-present fear for their lives,
42 certain policies are in need of being implemented; and

43 WHEREAS, equal justice under the law and economic equality are based upon the same
44 notions of fair play and impartiality; and

45 WHEREAS, in 2016, the net worth of a typical white family (\$171,000.00) was nearly ten
46 times greater than the net worth of a typical African American family (\$17,150.00); and

47 WHEREAS, gaps in wealth between African American and white households reveal the
48 effects of accumulated inequality and discrimination that can be traced back to this nation's
49 inception beginning with 246 years of chattel slavery, continuing through violent massacres
50 decimating community wealth after chattel slavery, and reinforced through discriminatory
51 policies throughout the twentieth century, including, but not limited to, the Jim Crow era's
52 "Black Codes" strictly limiting opportunities for African Americans in the GI bill, the New

53 Deal's Fair Labor Standards Act's exemption of domestic agricultural and service
54 occupations, and redlining; and

55 WHEREAS, for equality's sake, certain economic policies are in need of being implemented
56 for the continued work of closing such a wealth gap created by history's misdeeds.

57 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
58 the members of this body urge all governing authorities of this state with oversight of a law
59 enforcement agency or department to adopt the following policies to lessen the application
60 of police use of force:

61 (1) Ban the use of chokeholds and strangleholds, as allowing police officers to choke or
62 strangle civilians results in the unnecessary death or serious injury of civilians;

63 (2) Require police officers to de-escalate situations, when possible, by communicating
64 with subjects, maintaining distance, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force;

65 (3) Require police officers to give a verbal warning in all situations before using deadly
66 force;

67 (4) Require police officers to exhaust all other alternatives, including, but not limited to,
68 non-force and less lethal force options, prior to resorting to deadly force;

69 (5) Require police officers to intervene and to stop excessive force used by any other
70 officer and to report any such incidents immediately to a police supervisor;

71 (6) Ban police officers from shooting at moving vehicles in all cases, as to do so is a
72 particularly dangerous and ineffective tactic;

73 (7) Establish a force continuum that restricts the most severe types of force to the most
74 extreme situations and create clear policy restrictions on the use of each police weapon
75 and tactic; and

76 (8) Require police officers to report each time he or she uses force or threatens to use
77 force against civilians, including, but not limited to, when he or she points a firearm at
78 someone.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body urge that:

80 (1) There be established a requirement of 30-percent participation by minority business
81 enterprises as provided for under Part 4 of Article 3 of Chapter 5 of Title 50 of the
82 Official Code of Georgia Annotated as one of the fastest and most effective ways to
83 positively combat economic inequality;

84 (2) The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia establish professional
85 schools at historically Black institutions of the university system to award professional
86 degrees in law, medicine, engineering, architecture, food science, and other areas and to

87 implement a funding model for such historically Black institutions that align with other
88 institutions of the university system; and
89 (3) Local governing authorities institute similar other economic and educational policies
90 to foster economic equality.

91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
92 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for public distribution.