

House Resolution 117

By: Representatives Schofield of the 63rd, Burnough of the 77th, Jackson of the 68th, Davis of the 87th, and Scott of the 76th

A RESOLUTION

1 Acknowledging inequality as a public health issue and supporting BIPOC communities
2 disproportionately affected by systemic barriers; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the United States has historically and systemically disadvantaged racial, ethnic,
4 and religious groups, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), creating
5 inequities in public health and societal outcomes that persist today; and

6 WHEREAS, structural bias manifests in differential access by race to opportunities,
7 resources, conditions, and power within the country's medical, educational, and public health
8 systems, disproportionately impacting BIPOC communities; and

9 WHEREAS, BIPOC individuals face disproportionately high rates of chronic health
10 conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and stroke, largely due to the cumulative effects of
11 systemic inequities, stress, and barriers to equitable care; and

12 WHEREAS, the trauma associated with systemic inequities extends beyond physical health,
13 profoundly impacting mental health and well-being for BIPOC communities, as evidenced

14 by increased rates of stress-related disorders, depression, anxiety, and exposure to community
15 violence; and

16 WHEREAS, the arts have been recognized globally as a powerful tool to promote healing,
17 resilience, and mental well-being, with art therapy emerging as a clinically validated
18 intervention for addressing trauma, stress, and mental health disparities in BIPOC
19 populations; and

20 WHEREAS, creative expression through the arts provides an accessible and culturally
21 resonant way to process grief, pain, and systemic injustice, fostering community connections
22 and individual empowerment for BIPOC communities; and

23 WHEREAS, art therapy, as a trauma-informed practice, has shown effectiveness in reducing
24 symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), improving emotional regulation, and
25 providing an outlet for individuals and communities disproportionately affected by systemic
26 inequities; and

27 WHEREAS, mental health is a critical component of public health, and addressing inequity
28 as a public health crisis must include integrative approaches like the arts to mitigate the
29 long-term impacts of trauma on BIPOC communities; and

30 WHEREAS, public health organizations such as the American Medical Association, the
31 American Public Health Association, and others have declared inequity a public health issue
32 and emphasized the importance of innovative, interdisciplinary solutions to address its
33 impacts on BIPOC populations; and

34 WHEREAS, prioritizing investments in arts and health initiatives will amplify the state's
35 efforts to reduce disparities in health outcomes, particularly for BIPOC communities
36 historically marginalized due to systemic inequities.

37 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
38 the members of this body acknowledge systemic inequity as a public health crisis in the State
39 of Georgia, particularly its impact on BIPOC communities.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body recognize the essential role
41 of arts and art therapy as medicine to heal trauma, address mental health disparities, and
42 build community resilience in response to systemic inequities affecting BIPOC individuals
43 and communities.

44 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body advocate for the integration
45 of arts-based solutions into public health policies and programs addressing racial and
46 systemic disparities in health and mental health outcomes, particularly for BIPOC
47 populations.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body encourage funding for
49 community arts initiatives and art therapy programs, particularly in schools, healthcare
50 settings, and community organizations that serve BIPOC populations and other marginalized
51 communities.

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
53 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
54 Commissioner of Health, the Attorney General, and other relevant stakeholders in public
55 health and the arts.