

**No. R-121. House concurrent resolution recognizing the work of the Brattleboro community to combat racial and ethnic intolerance.**

(H.C.R.82)

Offered by: Representatives Edwards of Brattleboro, Burke of Brattleboro, Milkey of Brattleboro, Deen of Westminster, Marek of Newfane, Mrowicki of Putney and O'Donnell of Vernon

Whereas, in June 2008, the faculty and administration at Brattleboro Union High School discovered the existence of a student organization espousing racial hatred, and

Whereas, Vermont Safe Schools Education Consultant Charles Johnson, in consultation with local school and community leaders, soon initiated a process of examination and action to address the problems of racial intolerance in Brattleboro, and to develop ways to foster better understanding among individuals of diverse racial backgrounds, and

Whereas, the resulting "Future Search Conference" recently conducted a three-day meeting at which over 60 representatives of every gender, age, and racial group in Brattleboro participated, and

Whereas, the meeting sought both immediate and long-term constructive responses to the divisive racial bigotry that has surfaced at Brattleboro Union High School, and

Whereas, as a first step, school officials will be strengthening equity committees and diversity initiatives, especially with elementary-age students, and

Whereas, American Sign Language will be offered at BUHS and new relationships developed with the Boys and Girls Clubs where many of the students spend their time, and

Whereas, aside from the school-related programs, one of the most ambitious proposals is to establish the Wubuntu website as the new communications resource for the Future Search Conference, a name selected because it draws on the South African term “Ubuntu” meaning a person open and available to others plus the “W” standing for Windham County, and

Whereas, other initiatives under the conference’s auspices include taking steps to make Brattleboro a community that honors racial and ethnic diversity and dedicating the 2009 Fourth of July parade to the theme of diversity, and

Whereas, nonprofit organizations are being asked to work together to leverage any available federal stimulus funds to finance tolerance-related projects, and

Whereas, two other new organizations, the “No Bystander Movement” and the Racial Issues Steering Committee, are acting to instill a spirit of harmony and understanding in the increasingly diverse Brattleboro community, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commends the constructive and innovative initiatives of the Future Search Conference and other organizations that are

intended to reverse the climate of racial intolerance that has darkened the community discourse and emotional climate in Brattleboro, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Future Search Conference, Brattleboro Union High School Principal James T. Day, Brattleboro Town Manager Barbara Sondag, Brattleboro Area Interfaith Clergy Association Pastor Lise Sparrow, Vermont Safe Schools Coordinator Charles Johnson, and ALANA Community Organization Director Curtiss Reed Jr.