Joint resolution apologizing and expressing sincere condolences to all Vermonters and their families who were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned and eugenically inspired sterilization


Whereas, in 1925, UVM zoology professor Henry F. Perkins established the dubious Eugenics Survey of Vermont to measure defective behavior, “depravity,” and “immorality,” and it targeted members of Abenaki bands, Vermonters of mixed racial or French-Canadian heritage, the poor, and persons with disabilities, and

Whereas, the General Assembly adopted 1931 Acts and Resolves No. 174, “An Act for Human Betterment By Voluntary Sterilization,” to prevent the procreation of individuals belonging predominately to these groups, and

Whereas, this eugenically inspired legislation resulted in the sterilization of Vermonters, often without their fully informed voluntary consent, and

Whereas, the devastating impact on the lives of the sterilized individuals and their families was irreversible, and

Whereas, on June 21, 2019, the University of Vermont issued a formal statement of sincere apology for its “unethical and regrettable” eugenics role, and the General Assembly, on behalf of the State of Vermont, should issue a similar apology, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly apologizes and expresses its sincere sorrow to all Vermonters and their families who were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned and eugenically inspired sterilization.

Mitzi Johnson
Speaker of the House

Attested to:

David Zuckerman
President of the Senate

William M. MaGill
Clerk, House of Representatives