

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs to which
3 was referred Joint Resolution. J.R.H. 2. entitled “Joint resolution sincerely
4 apologizing and expressing sorrow and regret to all individual Vermonters and
5 their families and descendants who were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned
6 eugenics policies and practices” recommends that the resolution be amended
7 by striking out all Whereas and Resolved clauses and inserting in lieu thereof
8 the following:

9 Joint resolution sincerely apologizing and expressing sorrow and regret to
10 all individual Vermonters and their families and descendants who were harmed
11 as a result of State-sanctioned eugenics policies and practices

12 Whereas, State institutions established in the 19th century, including the
13 Vermont State Hospital for the Insane and the Vermont Reform School,
14 became settings for the implementation of eugenics policies, and]

15 Whereas, in 1912, the intent of the General Assembly to develop policies
16 that in later years would be identified as the practice of eugenics was
17 manifested with the passage of the subsequently vetoed S.79 of 1912, “An act
18 to authorize and provide for the sterilization of imbeciles, feeble-minded, and
19 insane persons, rapists, confirmed criminals and other defectives” and through
20 the enactment of Acts and Resolves No. 81 of 1912, “An act to provide for the

1 care, training and education of feeble-minded children,” the law authorizing
2 the Brandon Training School, which opened in 1915, and

3 Whereas, in 1925, University of Vermont zoology professor Henry F.
4 Perkins established the [discredited] Eugenics Survey of Vermont, with the
5 participation of leaders within Vermont State government, to collect evidence
6 of alleged delinquency, dependency, and [mental] deficiency, and this survey
7 targeted [Vermonters of Native American Indian heritage, among whom were
8 those who identified as Abenaki], mixed racial heritage, or French-Canadian
9 heritage, as well as the poor and persons with disabilities, among others, and

10 Whereas, in 1927, S.59 “An act related to Voluntary Eugenically
11 Sterilization” passed the Senate but was defeated in the House, and

12 Whereas, the General Assembly adopted 1931 Acts and Resolves No. 174
13 (Act 174) “An Act for Human Betterment by Voluntary Sterilization,” for the
14 purpose of eliminating from the future Vermont genetic pool persons deemed
15 mentally unfit to procreate, and

16 Whereas, Act 174 resulted in the sterilization of Vermonters, and whether
17 these individuals provided informed consent can be questioned, and

18 Whereas, this State-sanctioned eugenics policy was not an isolated example
19 of oppression, but reflected the historic marginalization, discriminatory
20 treatment, and displacement of these targeted groups in Vermont, and

1 Whereas, eugenics advocates promoted sterilization for the protection of
2 Vermont’s “old stock” and to preserve the physical and social environment of
3 Vermont for their children, and

4 Whereas, the Eugenics Survey received assistance from State and municipal
5 officials, individuals, and private organizations, and the resulting sterilization,
6 institutionalization, and separation policies intruded on the lives of its victims
7 and had devastating and irreversible impacts that still persist [in the lives of the
8 targeted groups and especially the descendants of the families who were
9 personally/directly impacted], and

10 Whereas, in conducting the Eugenics Survey, the surveyors were granted
11 access to case files from State agencies and institutions, and the files were
12 made available to persons of authority, including police departments, social
13 workers, educators, and town officials, and

14 [Whereas, Vermont’s role in the eugenics movement, including the State’s
15 sterilization and institutionalization practices has lasting impacts and
16 contributes to chronic health disparities experienced by Vermonters who are
17 Black or [Vermonters of Native American Indian heritage, among whom were
18 those who identified as Abenaki] and individuals with disabilities who have a
19 low income], and

20 Whereas, as a result of the opening of these files, children and adults were
21 removed from families, individuals were institutionalized or incarcerated,

1 family connections were severed, and the sense of kinship, continuity and
2 community was lost, now therefore be it

3 Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

4 That the General Assembly sincerely apologizes and expresses its sorrow
5 and regret to all individual Vermonters and their families and descendants who
6 were harmed as a result of State-sanctioned eugenics policies and practices,
7 and be it further

8 Resolved: That the General Assembly recognizes that further legislative
9 action should be taken to address the continuing impact of State-sanctioned
10 eugenics policies and related practices of disenfranchisement [, erasure,] and
11 ethnocide [leading to/and genocide] .

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15 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE