

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 Eugenics Survey of Vermont, with the participation of
5 leaders within Vermont State government, to collect evidence of Vermonters
6 alleged delinquency, dependency, and deficiency, and

7 Whereas, this survey targeted Vermonters of Native American Indian or
8 [French-Indian heritage], among whom were those whose descendants now
9 identify as Abenaki, and persons of mixed racial heritage, [French-Indian
10 heritage,] or French-Canadian heritage, as well as the poor and persons with
11 disabilities, among others, and

12 Whereas, in 1927, S.59 “An act related to Voluntary Eugenic
13 Sterilization” passed the Senate but was defeated in the House, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 Whereas, as a result of the opening of these files, children and adults were
18 removed from families, individuals were institutionalized or incarcerated,
19 family connections were severed, and the sense of kinship, continuity and
20 community was lost, now therefore be it

21 Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

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

5 Resolved: That the General Assembly recognizes that further legislative
6 action should be taken to address the continuing impact of State-sanctioned
7 eugenics policies and related practices of disenfranchisement, ethnocide, and
8 genocide.

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12 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE