

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 1923, the Department of Public Welfare was established, and  
4 this new State department compiled records on hundreds of families, and

5 Whereas, in 1925, University of Vermont zoology professor Henry F.  
6 Perkins established the discredited Eugenics Survey of Vermont, with the  
7 participation of leaders throughout Vermont State government, to collect  
8 evidence of alleged delinquency, dependency, and mental deficiency, and this  
9 survey targeted Vermonters of Native American Indian heritage, mixed racial  
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 on the directly affected  
11 individuals that still persist in the lives of their descendants, and

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

16        Whereas, Vermont’s role in the eugenics movement, including the State’s  
17 sterilization and institutionalization practices has lasting impacts and  
18 contributes to chronic health disparities experienced by Vermonters who are  
19 Black or Indigenous and individuals with disabilities who have a low income,  
20 and

1        Whereas, as a result of the opening of these files, children were removed  
2        from families, individuals were institutionalized or incarcerated, family  
3        connections were severed, and the sense of kinship and community was lost,  
4        now therefore be it

5        Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

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

10       Resolved: That the General Assembly recognizes that further legislative  
11       action should be taken to address the continuing impact of State-sanctioned  
12       eugenics policies and related practices of disenfranchisement and ethnocide  
13       leading to genocide.

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17       (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Representative \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE