



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

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7 December 2021

The Honorable Mike Wasserman, Board President
Board of Supervisors
70 W. Hedding St, 10th Floor
San José, CA 95129

Dear Board President and County Supervisors,

The Santa Clara County Human Rights Commission invited the San José State Human Rights Institute (HRI) to its August 2021 Commission meeting.

During the meeting, the HRI provided an overview of the 2021 Silicon Valley Pain Index [SVPI], which is a meta-analysis of over 60 studies, which provides a set of 90 data points to mark the struggles of the BIPOC and other marginalized communities. Hearing testimony from the creators of the SV Pain index and those who struggle from the disparity which the index showed, the HR Commission overwhelmingly believes that this index should become a standard tool within the county to mark how we are addressing the human rights needs of the County.

To that end, we ask the Board of Supervisors to do three things:

- 1st: Have you and your entire staff read the Silicon Valley Pain index;
- 2nd: Explore ways that human rights can be used as a framework, and the SVPI as an annual measure for decisions concerning at-risk communities in the County. One specific example would be to require that any proposal to change policy/practice in the County include the “human rights impacts” of the proposed policy/practice (as is already the case for considerations of other “impacts”).
- 3rd: Consider enacting the policies that the Human Rights Commission, in consultation with the SJSU Human Rights Institute, develop to address the vast inequalities found in the Pain Index.

We have already had conversations with the Division of Equity and Social Justice on how this document may be useful in their work. Further, we’ve found several organizations embracing the Pain Index as a resource, including the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

Since this is being tied into our work plan we would like to hear back from you by January 15.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Bryan James Franzen

Chairperson HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA