

HB 1354 -- OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY/RACIAL EQUITY TASK FORCE

SPONSOR: Windham

This bill establishes within the Office of Administration the "Office of Racial Equity". The Racial Equity Task Force will hire a Director of Racial Equity, who will employ other personnel as needed.

The Director must:

- (1) Conduct a comprehensive organizational review to identify systemic racism in each of the three branches of state government and inventory systems in place that cause racial disparities;
- (2) Manage and oversee the collection of race-based data to determine the nature and scope of racial discrimination within all systems of state government;
- (3) Develop a model fairness and diversity policy and review and make recommendations regarding the fairness and diversity policies of all state government systems;
- (4) Meet with the Racial Equity Task Force at least twice annually;
- (5) Collaborate with all state entities to gather existing data and records necessary to carry out the duties described in the bill and to develop best practices for remediating systemic racial disparities within state government;
- (6) Develop performance targets and measures for the General Assembly, the judiciary, and all departments and agencies of the executive branch to improve systemic racial disparities. Each entity shall make quarterly reports to the Director on its progress toward performance targets and measures;
- (7) Develop and conduct training for all state entities on the nature and scope of systemic racism and the institutionalized nature of race-based bias;
- (8) Periodically report to the Racial Equity Task Force on progress toward carrying out the duties established in this section; and
- (9) On or before December 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, prepare a report for the General Assembly on the progress of the Office of Racial Equity in identifying and remediating systemic racial bias within state government. The report shall include the performance targets and measures established for all state entities.

The bill also establishes the "Racial Equity Task Force". The Task Force will have the administrative, legal, and technical support of the Office of Administration. The composition of the Task Force is set out in the bill. Members must be from diverse backgrounds, have experience working to implement racial justice reform, and, to the extent possible, represent geographically diverse areas of the state. No member appointed shall be a member of the General Assembly at the time of his or her appointment.

The membership of the Task Force shall include but not be limited to: one member appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The term of each member shall be three years, except that the term of the first member appointed by the Missouri Commission on Human Rights shall be one year and the term of the first member appointed by the Governor shall be two years. Appointments of members to fill vacancies or expired terms shall be made by the authority that made the initial appointment to the vacated or expired term. Members shall serve until their successors are elected or appointed. Members shall serve not more than three consecutive terms in any capacity.

Members of the Task Force will elect a chair, who will serve as chair for the entirety of his or her term. Members must be appointed within 60 days after the effective date of this section.

Duties of the Task Force include:

(1) Working with the Director of Racial Equity to implement the reforms identified as necessary in the comprehensive organizational review conducted under subdivision (1) of subsection 1 of Section 37.865;

(2) Advising the Director of Racial Equity to ensure ongoing compliance with requirements of Section 37.865 and advise on strategies for remediating systemic racial disparities in statewide systems of government; and

(3) On or before December 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, reporting to the General Assembly on the extent to which the state is achieving the performance targets and measures created under Section 37.865.

Members of the Task Force will not receive compensation but will be eligible for reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses incurred in the course of their duties.