

HB 2615 -- RACIAL EQUITY

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 must 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, 2025, 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 must 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 membership of the Task Force will include but not be limited to one member appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one member appointed by the Governor. 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 can be a member of the General Assembly at the time of his or her appointment.

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 will serve until their successors are elected or appointed. Members can serve not more than three consecutive terms in any capacity.

Members of the Task Force will elect a chair, who will serve 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, RSMo;

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

(3) On or before December 1, 2025, 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.

This bill is the same as HB 1354 (2021).