

Chapter 417

(Senate Bill 350)

AN ACT concerning

Morgan State University – Task Force on Reconciliation and Equity

FOR the purpose of requiring the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University to convene a task force to foster reconciliation and inclusionary justice and work toward achieving racial equity by taking certain actions; requiring the task force to include certain members; requiring, to the extent practicable, the members of the task force to have expertise in certain matters and reflect a certain diversity; prohibiting a member of the task force from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; providing for the chair and staffing of the task force; authorizing the task force to establish certain subcommittees; requiring the task force to consult with certain units of State government; authorizing the task force to consult with certain units of State or local government; requiring, on request of the task force, a unit of State government to provide information or staff support in a certain manner or to designate a representative to serve as a member or attend a meeting or hearing of the task force; requiring the task force to hold certain hearings and invite certain persons to testify at the hearings, to study and make recommendations regarding certain matters, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of certain recommendations using certain criteria; prohibiting a certain person from retaliating against an individual for giving testimony at a hearing held by the task force; requiring, on or before certain dates, the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University to submit certain preliminary and full reports to the Governor and the General Assembly; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to a task force on reconciliation and equity convened by the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

That:

(a) The Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University shall convene a task force to foster reconciliation and inclusionary justice and work toward achieving racial equity by:

(1) increasing awareness through public discussions about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of racial inequities;

(2) involving individuals and public and private entities, including African American and other minority groups, in every sector throughout the State in a collective process;

(3) fostering racial equity through recognition, understanding, adjustment,

compromise, and repair; and

(4) recommending strategies, changes, and actions in institutions, policies, and laws to eliminate systemic racism and promote equity, access, and opportunity that can lead to healing and foster reconciliation.

(b) (1) The members of the task force required to be convened under this section shall include:

(i) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(ii) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(iii) the Director of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, or the Director's designee;

(iv) one representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People;

(v) one representative of the Maryland Public Health Association;

(vi) two representatives, one each from two different social justice organizations that focus on racial issues via use of a racial equity lens;

(vii) three representatives, one each from three different interfaith organizations;

(viii) one sociologist with expertise concerning historical and current impacts of systemic and structural racism;

(ix) one representative of a historically black college or university;

(x) one representative of a traditionally white college or university;

(xi) one representative of the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum;

(xii) one representative of a business sector coalition; and

(xiii) one member with expertise in law enforcement.

(2) To the extent practicable, the members of the task force shall:

(i) have expertise in the historical and current impacts of institutional and structural racism, as well as racial equity issues; and

(ii) reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of the State.

(3) A member of the task force:

(i) may not receive compensation as a member of the task force; but

(ii) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(4) The Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University shall:

(i) select a chair from among the members of the task force; and

(ii) provide staff for the task force.

(5) The task force may establish subcommittees as necessary to fulfill its duties.

(c) (1) The task force shall consult with the following units of State government:

(i) the Commission on Civil Rights;

(ii) the Office of the Attorney General, Division of Civil Rights;

(iii) the Department of Human Services;

(iv) the Department of Housing and Community Development;

(v) the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation;

(vi) the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services;

(vii) the Department of Transportation; and

(viii) the State Department of Education.

(2) The task force may consult with any other unit of State or local government as determined appropriate by the task force.

(3) On request of the task force, a unit of State government shall:

(i) provide information or staff support in a timely manner; or

(ii) designate a representative to:

1. serve as a member of the task force; or
2. attend a meeting or a hearing held by the task force.

(d) The task force shall:

(1) (i) hold hearings at various locations throughout the State and receive testimony from individuals, units of State and local government, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations; and

(ii) invite representatives from stakeholder groups to testify at the hearings;

(2) study:

(i) the nature of racism, sexism in the experience of racial inequities, and institutional bias throughout the State;

(ii) manifestations of institutional and structural racism;

(iii) the impact of institutional and structural racism, including the effects on health, employment and economic stability, access to safe and affordable housing, income inequality, educational opportunities, and achievement gaps;

(iv) past and ongoing efforts to promote human rights and social and inclusionary justice; and

(v) best practices throughout the United States regarding policies, laws, and systems designed to eliminate institutional and structural racism and sexism and foster repair for those impacted;

(3) identify criteria to be used in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the strategies and changes in institutions, policies, and laws recommended by the task force;

(4) make recommendations regarding strategies, changes, and actions in State institutions, policies, and laws to improve race relations, eliminate institutional and structural racism and gender inequities, and support repair and justice, including measures to:

(i) increase awareness of conscious and unconscious bias and structural inequities and their consequences;

(ii) eliminate implicit and explicit institutional bias;

(iii) improve structural support of inclusionary justice, promote repair that can lead to healing, and foster reconciliation between various groups; and

(iv) promote the overall health and success of individuals throughout the State, including improving access to employment opportunities, safe and affordable housing, adequate medical services and treatment, and a quality education; and

(5) using the criteria identified under item (3) of this subsection, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the recommended strategies and changes in State institutions, policies, and laws.

(e) A person, including an employer, may not retaliate against an individual for giving testimony at a hearing held by the task force.

(f) (1) On or before January 31, 2019, the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University shall submit a preliminary report on the activities of the task force to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

(2) On or before January 31, 2020, the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University shall submit a full report on the activities, findings, and recommendations of the task force to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2018. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of May 31, 2020, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2018.