

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 350

(Senator Nathan-Pulliam, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Appropriations

Morgan State University - Task Force on Reconciliation and Equity

This bill requires the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University (MSU) to convene a task force to explore issues of reconciliation, inclusionary justice, and racial equity that includes specified stakeholders. By January 31, 2019, the Institute must submit a preliminary report on the activities of the task force to the Governor and the General Assembly; by January 31, 2020, it must submit a final report on the activities, findings, and recommendations of the task force. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2018, and terminates May 31, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MSU are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. The bill is not otherwise anticipated to materially impact State government operations or finances, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Local governments can use existing resources if asked to consult with the task force.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must consult with specified State agencies and may consult with other units of State or local government, as appropriate. On request of the task force, a unit of State government must provide information or staff support in a timely manner or

designate a representative to serve as a member of the task force or attend a meeting or hearing of the task force.

To the extent practicable, the members of the task force must have expertise in the historical and current impacts of institutional and structural racism as well as racial equity issues and reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of the State. The institute must select a chair from among the members of the task force. A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

The purpose of the task force is 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.

The task force must:

- hold hearings at various locations throughout the State and receive testimony, as specified;
- study (1) the nature of racism, sexism in the experience of racial inequities, and institutional bias throughout the State; (2) manifestations of institutional and structural racism; (3) the impact of institutional and structural racism, as specified; (4) past and ongoing efforts to promote human rights and social and inclusionary justice; and (5) 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;
- identify the 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;
- 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 specified measures; and

- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the recommended strategies and changes in State institutions, policies, and laws using the criteria developed by the task force.

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

Current Law: The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, one of the entities required to consult with the task force to be convened pursuant to the bill, is an independent State agency that seeks to protect against discrimination based on race, color, religion or creed, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Its mission is to (1) ensure opportunity for all through the enforcement of Maryland’s laws against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and State contracts; (2) provide educational outreach services; and (3) promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

Background: The Institute for Urban Research at MSU provides a wide range of research and outreach services, including technical assistance, to community-based organizations in Baltimore and Central Maryland. Its research seeks to improve how government, private, and other institutions respond to the challenges of poverty, unemployment, poor health, truancy, and related problems.

State Expenditures: It is generally anticipated that most State agencies can use existing budgeted resources to consult with and provide requested information to the task force. However, depending on the work of the task force, it is possible that particular agencies may be asked to supplement staffing responsibilities or provide comprehensive information that requires additional resources. Any potential minimal increase in expenditures to accommodate such requests is not anticipated to materially impact State finances.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: SB 471 of 2017, a similar bill, received a hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, HB 1519, received a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee, but was subsequently withdrawn. SB 869 of 2016, a similar bill, passed the Senate as amended and was heard in the House Economic Matters Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Commission on Civil Rights; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Maryland Department of Transportation; Morgan State University; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 6, 2018
nb/kdm Third Reader - February 27, 2018

Analysis by: Jennifer K. Botts

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510