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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **HB 5614**

#### ***AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMISSION ON THE DISPARATE IMPACT OF COVID-19.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill establishes a 26-member Commission on the Disparate Impact of COVID-19 within the legislative department. The commission must, among other things, analyze any disparate impact of COVID-19 and the state's response to it on different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups and identify the causes of any such disparate impact.

The bill establishes qualifications for commission members and requires the commission to hold its first meeting by September 1, 2021. The commission must convene at least two working groups and hold any public hearings necessary to carry out its duties. The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity's (CWCSEO) administrative staff serve as the commission's administrative staff.

Starting January 1, 2022, the commission must annually report its findings and legislative and policy recommendations to the commission's appointing authorities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

#### **COMMISSION DUTIES**

Under the bill, the commission must:

1. analyze any disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state's different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups and identify its causes;
2. assess whether the state's response to COVID-19 exacerbated or mitigated any such disparate impact;

3. appoint and convene at least two working groups to analyze the impact of COVID-19, one each on (a) education, housing, and human services needs and (b) labor, commerce, and public health needs;
4. hold any necessary public hearings;
5. obtain any necessary assistance and data available from executive departments, boards, commissions, or other state agencies;
6. accept gifts, donations, or bequests for the purpose of performing its duties;
7. establish bylaws; and
8. perform any other necessary and appropriate acts to carry out its duties.

### **COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP**

The bill establishes the commission with 25 appointed members plus the CWCSEO executive director, or his designee, who serves as an ex-officio nonvoting member. Appointed members may be legislators.

Table 1 shows the appointing authority and required qualifications for the commission's 25 voting members.

**Table 1: Appointed Members**

<b><i>Appointing Authority</i></b>	<b><i>Number of Appointments</i></b>	<b><i>Qualifications</i></b>
Governor	Four	Must have expertise in evaluating racial, economic, and health disparities
House speaker	Four	Must have expertise in evaluating disparities in education, housing, and human services
Senate president pro tempore	Four	Must have expertise in evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on essential workers
House majority leader	Three	Two must have expertise in public health and infectious diseases; one

		must be a teacher
Senate majority leader	Three	Two must have expertise in small business; one must be a housing advocate
House minority leader	Three	Two must have expertise in nursing homes; one must be a representative of higher education
Senate minority leader	Three	Two must have expertise in health care delivery; one must have expertise in the hospitality industry
Chairperson of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus	One	Representative of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus

The bill requires appointing authorities to make their appointments by September 1, 2021, and fill any vacancies. Members serve two-year terms except for initial appointments, which terminate on August 31, 2022. Members may serve more than one term and must continue to serve until their successors are appointed.

Commission members are not paid but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses within available funds.

### **COMMISSION MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES**

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the chairperson from among the commission's members. The chairperson must schedule the commission's first meeting, which must be held by September 1, 2021. After that, the commission must meet upon the call of the chairperson.

Under the bill, a majority of the members constitutes a quorum to transact business.

### **COMMISSION REPORTS**

The bill requires the commission to annually report starting by January 1, 2022, to all commission appointing authorities on (1) the results of the commission's analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic's disparate impact on the state's racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic

groups and (2) policy and legislative recommendations to address the causes of any disparate impact and improve outcomes during any future pandemic.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 4 (03/11/2021)