



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 146

January Session, 2021

House Bill No. 5614

House of Representatives, March 29, 2021

The Committee on Commerce reported through REP. SIMMONS, C. of the 144th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

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

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section,
2 "COVID-19" means the respiratory disease designated by the World
3 Health Organization on February 11, 2020, as coronavirus 2019, and any
4 related mutation thereof recognized by the World Health Organization
5 as a communicable respiratory disease.

6 (b) There is established a Commission on the Disparate Impact of
7 COVID-19, which shall be part of the Legislative Department.

8 (c) The commission, established in subsection (b) of this section, shall
9 consist of the following members:

10 (1) Four appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
11 who have expertise in evaluating disparities in education, housing and
12 human services;

13 (2) Four appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who
14 have expertise in evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on essential
15 workers;

16 (3) Three appointed by the majority leader of the House of
17 Representatives, two of whom have expertise in public health and
18 infectious diseases and one of whom shall be a teacher;

19 (4) Three appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, two of
20 whom have expertise in small business and one of whom shall be a
21 housing advocate;

22 (5) Three appointed by the minority leader of the House of
23 Representatives, two of whom have expertise in nursing homes and one
24 of whom shall be a representative of higher education;

25 (6) Three appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, two of
26 whom have expertise in health care delivery and one of whom has
27 expertise in the hospitality industry;

28 (7) Four appointed by the Governor, who have expertise in
29 evaluating racial, economic and health disparities;

30 (8) A representative of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the
31 General Assembly, who shall be appointed by the chairperson of said
32 caucus; and

33 (9) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,
34 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, or the executive director's designee,
35 who shall be a nonvoting ex-officio member.

36 (d) Any member of the commission appointed under subsection (c)
37 of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

38 (e) All initial appointments to the commission shall be made not later
39 than September 1, 2021, and shall terminate on August 31, 2022,
40 regardless of when the initial appointment was made. Any member of
41 the commission may serve more than one term.

42 (f) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro
43 tempore of the Senate shall select the chairperson of the commission
44 from among the members of the commission. Such chairperson shall
45 schedule the first meeting of the commission, which shall be held not
46 later than September 1, 2021.

47 (g) The administrative staff of the Commission on Women, Children,
48 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall serve as administrative staff of
49 the commission.

50 (h) Appointed members of the commission shall serve for two-year
51 terms, which shall commence on the date of appointment, except as
52 provided in subsection (e) of this section. Members shall continue to
53 serve until their successors are appointed.

54 (i) Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. Any
55 vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the
56 balance of the unexpired term.

57 (j) A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the
58 transaction of any business.

59 (k) The members of the commission shall serve without
60 compensation, but shall, within available funds, be reimbursed for
61 expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

62 (l) The commission shall have the following powers and duties: (1)
63 To analyze any disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on
64 different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the state; (2) to
65 identify the causes for such disparate impact; (3) to assess whether such
66 disparate impact was worsened or corrected by state responses to the
67 COVID-19 pandemic; (4) to appoint and convene at least two working
68 groups to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, one to focus
69 on the impact on education, housing and human services needs and
70 another to focus on the impact on labor, commerce and public health
71 needs; (5) to hold one or more public hearings as necessary to carry out
72 the purposes of this section; (6) to obtain from any executive

73 department, board, commission or other agency of the state such
 74 assistance and data as necessary and available to carry out the purposes
 75 of this section; (7) to accept any gift, donation or bequest for the purpose
 76 of performing the duties described in this section; (8) to establish bylaws
 77 to govern its procedures; and (9) to perform such other acts as may be
 78 necessary and appropriate to carry out the duties described in this
 79 subsection.

80 (m) The commission shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the
 81 chairperson.

82 (n) Not later than January 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the
 83 commission shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of
 84 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Governor, the speaker of the
 85 House of Representatives, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the
 86 majority leader of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of
 87 the Senate, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the
 88 minority leader of the Senate and the chairperson of the Black and
 89 Puerto Rican Caucus of the General Assembly on (1) the results of the
 90 commission's analysis pursuant to subsection (l) of this section, and (2)
 91 recommendations for policy changes and amendments to the general
 92 statutes necessary to address the causes for any disparate impact of the
 93 COVID-19 pandemic and to improve outcomes during any future
 94 pandemic.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

CE *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Minimal

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill establishes a twenty-six-member Commission on the Disparate Impact of COVID-19, which shall be part of the legislative department. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall, within available funds, be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. This is expected to be minimal.

Not later than January 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the commission shall submit a report outlining recommendations for policy changes and amendments to the general statutes necessary to address the causes for any disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve outcomes during any future pandemic.

The Out Years

State Impact: Minimal

Municipal Impact: None

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

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Number of Appointments</i>	<i>Qualifications</i>
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	Four	Must have expertise in evaluating the

tempore		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)