



House Bill No. 5614

Special Act No. 21-37

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:

Section 1. (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) As used in this section, "COVID-19" means the respiratory disease designated by the World Health Organization on February 11, 2020, as coronavirus 2019, and any related mutation thereof recognized by the World Health Organization as a communicable respiratory disease.

(b) There is established a Commission on the Disparate Impact of COVID-19, which shall be part of the Legislative Department. The commission shall expire on June 20, 2023, or upon a two-thirds vote of the membership of the commission, whichever is earlier.

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

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

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

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workers;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(e) All initial appointments to the commission shall be made not later than September 1, 2021.

(f) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairperson of the commission from among the members of the commission. Such chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the commission, which shall be held not

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later than September 1, 2021.

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

(h) Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

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

(j) 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.

(k) The commission shall have the following powers and duties: (1) To analyze any disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on different racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic groups in the state; (2) to identify the causes for such disparate impact; (3) to assess the effects of federal and state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic on such disparate impact; (4) to appoint and convene at least two working groups to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, one to focus on the impact on education, housing and human services needs and another to focus on the impact on labor, commerce and public health needs; (5) to hold one or more public hearings as necessary to carry out the purposes of this section; (6) to request from any executive department, board, commission or other agency of the state such assistance and data as necessary, reasonable and available to carry out the purposes of this section; (7) to accept any gift, donation or bequest for the purpose of performing the duties described in this section; (8) to establish bylaws to govern its procedures; and (9) to perform such other acts as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the duties described in this subsection.

(l) The commission shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the

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chairperson.

(m) Not later than January 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the commission shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the Senate and the chairperson of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the General Assembly on (1) the results of the commission's analysis pursuant to subsection (k) of this section, and (2) 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.

Approved July 12, 2021