

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1948

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to the state commission on Hispanic affairs.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions regarding the state commission on Hispanic affairs.

Sponsors: Representatives Bray, Ludwig, Rayburn and Grant.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, March 3, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King; and Pruitt.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: In 1971, the Legislature established the Mexican-American Affairs Commission to address the unique and special problems of Mexican-American and Spanish speaking populations. In 1987, the Legislature changed the name of the commission to the Hispanic Affairs Commission, membership was diversified to include Hispanics who are not of Mexican-American origin, and provisions were added to sunset the commission in 1997.

The commission is currently directed to: advise state agencies on actions to be taken to assure that state programs are providing the assistance needed by Hispanics; advise state agencies on the development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs focusing on the special problems and needs of Hispanics; and receive technical assistance from an interagency advisory council on Hispanic affairs.

The commission includes 11 members of Hispanic origin as follows: (1) two agricultural workers; (2) three Hispanics

not of Mexican-American origin; (3) one member from the field of education; (4) one member who is a business, governmental, or public service professional; (5) one trade union official; (6) and three members of the Mexican-American community.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Appointments to the Hispanic Affairs Commission will be made to achieve a balanced representation based on population distribution, geographic considerations, sex, age, and occupation. Specific national origin and occupational membership categories are deleted. No member will serve more than two consecutive terms.

The duties of the Hispanic Affairs Commission are expanded to include: making recommendations to the governor and state agencies on needed changes in laws and policies; advising the Legislature; establishing relationships with the private sector and local governments to promote equal opportunity; and receiving and spending gifts, grants, and endowments. The interagency advisory council is repealed.

The sunset date for the commission is changed from 1997 to 2021.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill changed the name of the commission to the "Hispanic-American Affairs Commission." The substitute bill restores the commission's current name.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 2, 1993.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill updates the statutory language to make it uniform with the other minority commissions. There is not support for the name change. There is strong support for increasing the commission's powers and duties, and bringing them into parity with the powers and duties of the African-American and Asian-American commissions. The commission should be continued into the 21st century.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Oscar Cerda (pro); and Ana E. Rojas, Commission on Hispanic Affairs (pro).