

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHB 2759

C 98 L 18
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing the Washington state women's commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Doglio, Jinkins, Senn, Pettigrew, Dolan, Hudgins, Stanford, Chapman, Kagi, Appleton, Gregerson, Tarleton, Santos, Kilduff, Pollet, Macri, Frame and Bergquist.

House Committee on State Government, Elections & Information Technology
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

In 1971 the Washington State Women's Council (Women's Council) was created by executive order. The Women's Council was comprised of approximately 15 members appointed by the Governor. The Women's Council was directed to consider appropriate questions pertaining to the rights and needs of women in contemporary America and to make recommendations to the Governor and any state agencies regarding changes in program and law. In 1978 the Women's Council was discontinued through executive order after Referendum 40, which asked whether to establish a state Women's Commission, was defeated.

In 1963 the Interagency Committee for State Employed Women (ICSEW) was established by the Governor. The Governor most recently affirmed the ICSEW by executive order in 2016. The ICSEW examines and defines issues pertaining to the rights and needs of women employed in state government and makes policy recommendations to the Governor and state agencies with respect to desirable changes in programs, policies, and laws. The areas of focus include education, training, career development, and other conditions of employment. The ICSEW also advises state agencies on the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated policies, plans, and programs focusing on the issues and needs of women in state government. The membership consists of state agency representatives with a maximum number of 60 members, who are appointed by the leadership of each agency. The Office of the Governor designates one of its executive policy advisors as the committee liaison and staff person.

Summary:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Women's Commission (Women's Commission) is established in the Office of the Governor. The Governor must appoint an executive director (Director) to administer the Women's Commission. The Director must employ staff for the Women's Commission, and the Women's Commission must provide staff support to the ICSEW.

Membership.

The Women's Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the Senate. There are an additional four advisory members as follows:

- two members of the Senate, one from each of the two major political parties appointed by the President of the Senate; and
- two members of the House of Representatives (House), one from each of the two major political parties appointed by the Speaker of the House.

The Governor must consider nominations for membership based on maintaining a balanced and diverse distribution of ethnic, geographic, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and occupational representation.

The initial members serve for staggered terms: three serve for one year; three serve for two years; and three serve for three years. Subsequently, members serve three-year terms unless reappointed by the Governor. Advisory members serve two-year terms.

Duties—Director.

The Director must:

- monitor state legislation and advocate for legislation affecting women;
- work with state agencies to assess programs and policies that affect women;
- coordinate with the minority commissions and human rights commission to address issues of mutual concern; and
- work as a liaison between the public and private sector to eliminate barriers to women's economic equity.

Duties—Women's Commission.

The Women's Commission must:

- submit a biennial report to the Legislature and the Governor detailing the Women's Commission's activities;
- recruit and maintain a list of names of qualified women to fill vacancies on various boards and commissions;
- provide a clearinghouse for information regarding state and federal legislation as it relates to the Women's Commission's purpose;
- identify and define specific needs of women of color and provide recommendations in the biennial report to the Legislature and the Governor;
- consult with state agencies regarding the effect of agency policies, rules, and practices on the unique problems and needs of women, and advise state agencies on the development of comprehensive and coordinated policies that focus on those problems and needs;
- provide resource and referral information to agencies and the public;
- hold public hearings to gather input on issues related to the unique problems and needs of women and include recommendations in its biennial report to the Legislature and the Governor;

- advocate for the removal of legal and social barriers for women;
- review and recommend to the Legislature strategies to increase the number of women serving on for-profit boards with a gross income of at least \$5 million; and
- review best practices for sexual harassment policies and training and provide recommendations to state agencies.

The Women's Commission must work with the Washington Women's History Consortium to prepare for a 2020 statewide commemoration of women's suffrage, subject to appropriation. The Women's Commission may engage in certain activities to carry out this purpose such as appointing task forces or advisory committees, and entering into contracts.

State agencies must provide appropriate and reasonable assistance to the Women's Commission as needed, such as gathering data, to assist the Women's Commission in carrying out its purpose.

Powers—Women's Commission.

The Women's Commission may:

- receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources, which the Director is required to report to the Office of Financial Management on a regular basis;
- establish relationships with public and private institutions, local governments, private industry, community organizations, and other segments of the public as needed to promote equal opportunity for women; and
- adopt rules as necessary.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	65	33	
Senate	44	5	(Senate amended)
House	50	47	(House concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2018