

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 1783

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### PARTIAL VETO C 332 L 20 Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington state office of equity.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Morgan, Ryu, Lovick, Valdez, Ramos, Thai, Reeves, Slatter, Lekanoff, Peterson, Macri, Entenman, Pettigrew, Bergquist, Callan, Stonier, Orwall, Hudgins, Riccelli, Mead, Senn, Santos, Chapman, Walen, Kloba, Doglio, Tarleton, Pollet, Dolan, Davis, Jinkins, Wylie, Shewmake, Pellicciotti, Fey, Stanford, Sells, Morris, Kilduff, Leavitt, Appleton, Tharinger, Ormsby, Frame and Robinson).

**House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

#### **Background:**

Various state agencies, including the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities (Council), have undertaken efforts to promote equity and reduce disparities statewide. In January 2018 the Council issued a state policy action plan related to its work to eliminate health inequities by race, ethnicity, and gender. As part of that plan, the Council recommended that the Governor issue a policy to create a comprehensive initiative to promote equity in state government. The Council recommended that the initiative include actions such as collecting disaggregated data to raise awareness of inequities and ensuring diverse communities have a voice in state government decisions.

A proviso in the 2019-2021 biennial operating budget directed the Council to convene and staff an Office of Equity Task Force (Task Force) that would develop a proposal for the creation of the Washington State Office of Equity (Equity Office). The Task Force is composed of representatives from:

- the Council;
- the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs;
- the Commission on African American Affairs;
- the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs;
- the Commission on Hispanic Affairs;

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- the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises;
- the Washington State Women's Commission;
- the Human Rights Commission; and
- the disability community appointed by the Chair of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

In addition, the Task Force includes two Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate. The Governor also appoints three members to the Task Force, including representatives from the Office of the Governor, the Office of Financial Management's (OFM) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer community.

The Task Force has held multiple public meetings and public forums in different locations across the state as part of its work to develop recommendations on the general structure and roles for the Equity Office. The Task Force will continue to meet in 2020 to develop additional recommendations and is required to produce a final report by July 1, 2020.

### **Summary:**

#### Washington State Office of Equity Established.

The Equity Office is established on July 1, 2020, within the Office of the Governor, to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes statewide across state government. The work of the Equity Office must be guided by specified principles of equity and must complement and not supplant the work of statutory commissions.

The Governor is required to appoint a Director, with the consent of the Senate, to administer the Equity Office. The Director must employ and supervise staff and oversee the administration and programs of the Equity Office in accordance with guiding principles.

#### Duties of the Washington State Office of Equity.

The Equity Office is required to facilitate state policy and systems change to promote equitable policies, practices, and outcomes through:

- assisting agencies in applying an equity lens to agency decision-making through various means;
- staffing a Community Advisory Board (Board);
- collaborating with the OFM and the Department of Enterprise Services to develop policies and provide technical assistance and training for agencies on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce;
- collaborating with the OFM and agencies to establish certain standards for data, create performance measures, and develop an online performance dashboard;
- tracking disparities in public employment;
- coordinating with the Office of Privacy and Data Protection to address cybersecurity and data protection; and
- promoting accountability through agency performance reports and establishing procedures to hold agencies accountable which may include performance reviews.

The Equity Office must submit a report to the Governor and Legislature by October 1, 2022, and every year thereafter that includes a summary of the Equity Office's work an overview of agency compliance, and an equity analysis of the makeup of the Board. The Equity Office and its Director must review final recommendations submitted by the Task Force and report to the Governor and the Legislature any additional recommendations

Powers of the Washington State Office of Equity.

Among other powers, the Equity Office may:

- provide technical assistance to agencies;
- conduct research projects and policy analyses;
- develop policy positions and legislative proposals; and
- consider ways to promote investments in enterprise-level diversity, equity, and inclusion projects.

Community Advisory Board.

The Board is created to advise the Equity Office on its priorities and timelines and provide guidance on standards and performance measures. The Director appoints members to the Board to support diverse representation by geography and identity. Members of the Board are entitled to compensation and reimbursement for travel expenses.

Responsibilities of State Agencies.

All state agencies are required to:

- designate diversity, equity, and inclusion liaisons;
- apply an equity lens to assess existing and proposed policies, service delivery, programs, practices, and budget decisions;
- develop and submit diversity, equity, and inclusion plans;
- develop written language access policies and plans;
- collaborate with the Equity Office to establish performance measures;
- provide data and information to the Equity Office as requested; and
- submit a response to the Equity Office's report on agency performance

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	56	41	
Senate	28	21	(Senate amended)
House	57	39	(House concurred)

**Effective:** June 11, 2020  
July 1, 2020 (Section 3)

**Partial Veto Summary:** The Governor vetoed the section that: created a Board within the Equity Office; required the appointment of members to the Board; and prescribed the duties, powers, and compensation of the Board. The Governor also vetoed the section that required agencies to perform certain tasks, including: designating an agency diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) liaison; using the assessment tools developed by the Equity Office to apply an equity lens to its policies and programs; creating and submitting a DEI plan to the Equity Office; developing and maintaining written language access policies and plans; collaborating with the Equity Office to establish performance measures; providing data and information to

the Equity Office; and submitting responses to the Equity Office's report on agency performance.