

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5776

As of February 25, 2019

Title: An act relating to creating the Washington state office of equity.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington state office of equity.

Sponsors: Senators Dhingra, Das, Randall, Nguyen, Saldaña, Darneille, Keiser and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/22/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Washington State Office of Equity (office), effective January 1, 2020.
- Establishes a task force to create the initial operations plan for the office.
- Requires agencies provide appropriate and reasonable assistance to the office, work to meet performance measures established, and implement the equity assessment tools as appropriate.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: Various state entities have done work around promoting equity and reducing disparities. Some examples include the:

- Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council on Health Disparities (council), established by the Legislature in 2006, which promotes and facilitates communication, coordination, and collaboration among relevant state agencies and communities of color, and the private and public sector, to address health disparities;
- State Board of Health conducts Health Impact Reviews on any state legislative or budgetary change, which must consider the direct impacts on health disparities as well as changes in the social determinants of health; and
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council works collaboratively with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) to

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develop recommendations to build a diverse, inclusive, and culturally competent workforce.

Summary of Bill: Washington State Office of Equity. The office is created on January 1, 2020, in the office of the Governor to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes statewide across all sectors of government. The Governor must appoint a director who will:

- supervise the administration of the office;
- employ and supervise staff; and
- implement the operations plan established by the task force.

Office Duties. The office must:

- promote community outreach and engagement;
- collaborate with OFM and DES to develop policies, provide technical assistance and training for agencies on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and culturally sensitive workforce; and
- in collaboration with Results Washington and agencies as appropriate, establish standards for collection, analysis and reporting of disaggregated data regarding race and ethnicity, agency-specific performance measures using outcome-based methodology to determine the effectiveness of agency programs and services, and an online performance dashboard.

The office must also facilitate state policy and systems change to promote equity in policy, practice and outcomes through:

- identification of agency policies and practices that may perpetuate inequities;
- recommending best practices for promoting equity in providing services;
- developing equity assessment tools for agency use; and
- providing technical assistance to agencies in implementing best practices and assessment tools.

Office Powers. The office may:

- convene workgroups as needed;
- compile and create resources for agencies as guidance;
- provide technical assistance to agencies;
- receive gifts, grants and endowments from public or private sources; and
- adopt rules as necessary.

State Agencies. All agencies must:

- provide appropriate and reasonable assistance to the office;
- work to meet performance measures established, with technical assistance from the office; and
- implement the equity assessment tools established.

Task Force. A task force is established to create and submit, to the Governor and the director of the office, by December 1, 2019, the initial operations plan for the office. The operations plan must include:

- a mission and vision statement for the office;
- definition of equity that must be used by the office to guide its work;

- the organizational structure of the office;
- guidance on best practices for developing agency performance measures;
- mechanisms for accountability to ensure that performance measures are being met; and
- the estimate cost to carry out the work of the office.

The task force members include:

- the chair of the council, who will serve as the chair of the task force;
- one member from the appropriate committee of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;
- one member from the appropriate committee of the Senate, appointed by the president of the Senate;
- a representative from Office of the Governor and OFM's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, both appointed by the Governor;
- a representative from the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprise (OWMBE), appointed by the OMWBE director;
- a representative from each ethnic commission and the Women's Commission, appointed by the director of the respective commission;
- the director of the Governor's Office of Indian affairs, or the director's designee; and
- a member of the disability community, appointed by the chair of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment.

Task force members are entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

The council must provide staff support for the task force and coordinate community and stakeholder outreach to solicit feedback before adoption of the task force operations plan. The task force may contract with consultants and form work groups to inform the work of the taskforce in developing recommendations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2019.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Race influences where we live, work, health impacts and other things on a daily basis and may advantage some and disadvantage others. Many agencies are doing work around equity, but the Equity Office would help to provide coordination and a mechanism for collaboration between agencies and across sectors. Agencies are already doing work in this area but no agency can do the work alone. A coordinated statewide effort can make a real impact and will allow agencies to recognize the value of working together to identify and dismantle these inequities in a more unified way. No two communities are the same and some face disproportional impacts. The bill recognizes that consultation with impacted communities is needed to make a difference. The state would be a national leader by having this Office.

OTHER: Agree that equity is an outstanding goal, but one barrier not mentioned in this bill is discrimination based on age. Age discrimination occurs across all other categories and should be considered under the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Manka Dhingra, Prime Sponsor; Matias Valenzuela, King County—Office of Equity and Social Justice; Aaron Czyzewski, Food Lifeline; Kimberly Goetz, Department of Ecology; Christy Hoff, Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities; Jim Bamberger, Office of Civil Legal Aid.

OTHER: Fred Yancey, State School Retirees' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Sheila Burrus, citizen; Bong Santo Domingo, Filipino Community of Seattle.