

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 1300

(Delegate Hill, *et al.*)

Government, Labor, and Elections

Education, Energy, and the Environment

**African American Heritage Preservation Program and Maryland Commission
for Women - Renaming and Alterations**

This bill alters the duties of the Maryland Commission for Women. The bill removes the requirement that the executive director of the commission be appointed by the Secretary of Human Services and instead specifies that the executive director is not considered a special appointee and is in the skilled service in the State Personnel Management System (SPMS). The bill also renames the African American Heritage Preservation Program (AAHPP) to be the Speaker Adrienne A. Jones African American Heritage Preservation Program.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any impact on the Department of Human Services (DHS) to reclassify the executive director position is negligible. The commission can otherwise meet the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources. Altering the name of AAHPP does not affect governmental finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law:

Maryland Commission for Women

Under current law, the Maryland Commission for Women in DHS works to advance solutions and to expand social, political, and economic opportunities for all women. The commission must:

- stimulate and encourage study and review of the status of women in the State;
- strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting women as wives, mothers, homemakers, and workers;
- recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women in public and private employment;
- encourage women to become candidates for public office;
- promote more effective methods for enabling women to develop their skills, continue their education, and be retrained;
- secure appropriate recognition of women's accomplishments and contributions to the State;
- work to develop healthy attitudes within the framework of the commission's responsibilities; and
- inform the Executive and Legislative branches on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on these issues.

The bill removes requirements to (1) recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women in public and private employment; (2) encourage women to become candidates for public office; (3) promote more effective methods for enabling women to develop their skills, continue their education, and be retrained; and (4) work to develop healthy attitudes within the framework of the commission's responsibilities.

The bill alters the requirement to strengthen *the conditions for women in society* by directing *critical* attention to critical problems confronting women *in their various roles*.

The bill adds requirements to:

- conduct research on issues that impact women and identify existing disparities;
- conduct studies and assist with programs, seminars, and conferences to raise public awareness about issues impacting women;
- support policies and programs that promote the well-being of women;

- raise public awareness of a wide range of issues affecting women, including economic security, life transitions, and women's health;
- promote and assist statewide women's organizations, local commissions for women, and local volunteer programs focused on improving conditions for women;
- advocate for legislation supporting women's economic empowerment, women's health, cultural development, social inclusion, and other policies that promote the equality and flourishing of all people;
- recommend strategies to reduce discrimination and increase opportunities for women in employment, education, the law, State government, and elected and appointed positions across professions and within society; and
- support partner organization programs on career development, financial wellness, and violence prevention.

The bill specifies that the commission may make surveys and appoint advisory committees in *all fields affecting the lives of women in the State*.

Under current law, the executive director of the commission must be a merit employee of DHS and is entitled to compensation provided in the State budget. Per § 1-305 of the State Personnel and Pensions Article, an employee who is in a position under a special appointment (or in the management service or executive service) serves at the pleasure of the employee's appointing authority and may be terminated from employment for any reason that is not illegal or unconstitutional, solely in the discretion of the appointing authority.

The bill specifies that the executive director is not considered a special appointee and is in the skilled service in the SPMS.

Under current law, the commission must submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly. The commission's fiscal 2025 report can be found [here](#).

African American Heritage Preservation Program

Under current law, AAHPP provides grants to assist in the preservation of buildings, sites, and communities significant to African American history and culture in the State. The program is jointly administered by the Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. Eligible applicants include individuals, business entities, nonprofit organizations, and local governments. Projects must be located in Maryland and demonstrate a clear, direct connection to African American history, culture, or heritage. AAHPP provides capital grants to, among other things, preserve, acquire, restore, or stabilize sites or structures; or develop new facilities to interpret or celebrate African American history.

The bill renames AAHPP to be the Speaker Adrienne A. Jones African American Heritage Preservation Program.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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