

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 251

(Senator M. Washington)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Health and Government Operations

State Government - Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs - Alterations

This bill renames the Commission on LGBTQ Affairs to be the Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs and makes numerous changes to reflect the new name and mandate of the commission. The bill also alters provisions regarding membership of the commission.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s changes, including expense reimbursements for additional members, can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: The Commission on LGBTQ Affairs – a unit within the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives – is renamed as the Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. “LGBTQIA+” means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, agender, or aromantic, and additional identities.

Under current law, the commission consists of 15 members who serve four-year terms. Members of the commission may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget. The bill increases the number of commission members to 21 and establishes that the terms of the members are staggered, as specified. Among other qualifications, members under current law are required, to the extent practicable, to reflect the gender,

racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the State; the bill adds that age, gender identity or expression, ancestral, national origin, color, disability, religious, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic diversity must also be considered.

Under current law, the commission must (1) assess the challenges facing LGBTQ communities; (2) collect data across State agencies on the implementation of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and complaints alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; (3) study and establish best practices for inclusion of LGBTQ individuals and communities; (4) inform the Executive and Legislative branches of State government of issues concerning women and LGBTQ persons; (5) offer testimony on issues concerning women and LGBTQ persons before legislative and administrative bodies; (6) act as a clearinghouse for activities to avoid duplication of efforts; (7) create surveys and appoint advisory committees in several specified fields; and (8) publish an annual report, and any other material the commission considers necessary, that includes recommendations on policies for LGBTQ adults and youth that work to end discriminatory practices in the State. The bill repeals requirements for the commission to specifically inform specified branches of State government of and offer testimony on issues concerning women.

Consistent with the commission’s new name, the bill also replaces above references with “LGBTQIA+”, thereby updating the mandate of the commission to include issues impacting questioning, intersex, asexual, agender, or aromantic, and additional identities.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 141 (Delegate Qi, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Governor’s Office; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 3, 2023
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