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SENATE BILL 6583

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Senators Wellman, Ranker, Keiser, Hunt, Hasegawa, Dhingra,  
Darneille, and Conway

Read first time 01/30/18. Referred to Committee on State Government,  
Tribal Relations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the Washington state women's  
2 commission; and adding a new chapter to Title 43 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is important  
5 to achieve equal opportunity for all of its citizens. The legislature  
6 finds that women face unique problems and needs. For economic,  
7 social, and historical reasons, a disproportionate number of women  
8 find themselves disadvantaged or isolated from the benefits of equal  
9 opportunity. It is the purpose of this chapter to improve the well-  
10 being of women, by enabling them to participate fully in all fields  
11 of endeavor, assisting them in obtaining governmental services, and  
12 promoting equal compensation and fairness in employment for women.  
13 The legislature also believes that addressing women's issues and  
14 improving the well-being of women will have a positive impact on  
15 larger societal issues. The legislature further finds that the  
16 development of public policy and the efficient delivery of  
17 governmental services to meet the needs of women can be improved by  
18 establishing a focal point in state government for the interests of  
19 women. Therefore, the legislature deems it necessary to establish in  
20 statute the Washington state women's commission to further these  
21 purposes. The commission shall address issues relevant to the

1 problems and needs of women, such as domestic violence, child care,  
2 child support, sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, equal  
3 compensation and job pathways opportunities in employment, and the  
4 specific needs of women of color.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The Washington state women's commission is  
6 established in the office of the governor. The commission shall be  
7 administered by an executive director, who shall be appointed by, and  
8 serve at the pleasure of, the governor. The governor shall set the  
9 salary of the executive director. The executive director shall employ  
10 the staff of the commission.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The Washington state women's  
12 commission shall consist of nine members appointed by the governor  
13 with the advice and consent of the senate.

14 (2) Two members of the senate, one from each of the two major  
15 political parties, appointed by the president of the senate, and two  
16 members of the house of representatives, one from each of the two  
17 major political parties, appointed by the speaker of the house of  
18 representatives, shall serve as advisory members.

19 (3) The governor shall consider nominations for membership based  
20 upon maintaining a balanced and diverse distribution of ethnic,  
21 geographic, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status,  
22 and occupational representation, where practicable.

23 (4) All commission members shall serve at the pleasure of the  
24 governor, but in no case may any member serve more than three years  
25 without formal reappointment by the governor. All legislative  
26 advisory members shall serve for a two-year term and the position of  
27 any legislative advisory member shall be deemed vacated whenever such  
28 member ceases to be a member of the house from which the member was  
29 appointed. Of the persons initially appointed by the governor to the  
30 commission, three shall be appointed to serve one year, three to  
31 serve two years, and three to serve three years. Upon expiration of  
32 such terms, subsequent appointments shall be for three years. Any  
33 vacancies occurring in the membership of the commission shall be  
34 filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as  
35 the original appointments.

36 (5)(a) Nonlegislative members shall be reimbursed for expenses  
37 incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW  
38 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

1 (b) Legislative members shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred  
2 in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

3 (6) A simple majority of the commission's membership constitutes  
4 a quorum for the purpose of conducting business.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The director of the Washington state  
6 women's commission shall:

7 (1) Monitor state legislation and advocate for legislation  
8 affecting women;

9 (2) Work with state agencies to assess programs and policies that  
10 affect women;

11 (3) Coordinate with the minority commissions and human rights  
12 commission to address issues of mutual concern; and

13 (4) Work as a liaison between the public and private sector to  
14 eliminate barriers to women's economic equity.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The Washington state women's  
16 commission shall have the following duties:

17 (a) Actively recruit and maintain a list of names of qualified  
18 women to fill vacancies on various boards and commissions;

19 (b) Provide a clearinghouse for information regarding both state  
20 and federal legislation as it relates to the purpose of this chapter;

21 (c) Identify and define specific needs of women of color and  
22 provide recommendations for addressing those needs in the biennial  
23 report to the legislature and governor under (i) of this subsection;

24 (d) Consult with state agencies regarding the effect of agency  
25 policies, procedures, practices, laws, and administrative rules on  
26 the unique problems and needs of women. The commission shall also  
27 advise such state agencies on the development and implementation of  
28 comprehensive and coordinated policies, plans, and programs focusing  
29 on those problems and needs;

30 (e) Provide resource and referral information to agencies and the  
31 public. The commission may gather data and disseminate information to  
32 the public in order to implement the purposes of this chapter;

33 (f) Hold public hearings to gather input on issues related to the  
34 unique problems and needs of women. The commission must include in  
35 the biennial report submitted under (i) of this subsection the input  
36 received and recommendations for addressing the problems and needs  
37 discussed at the public hearings;

38 (g) Advocate for removal of legal and social barriers for women;

1 (h) Review best practices for sexual harassment policies and  
2 training and provide recommendations to state agencies as they update  
3 their sexual harassment policies. The commission shall also maintain  
4 a file of sexual harassment policies that meet high quality standards  
5 and make these files available for agency use; and

6 (i) Submit a report to the appropriate committees of the  
7 legislature and the governor every two years detailing the  
8 commission's activities. The report submitted must be in electronic  
9 format pursuant to RCW 43.01.036.

10 (2) State agencies must provide appropriate and reasonable  
11 assistance to the commission as needed, including gathering data and  
12 information, in order for the commission to carry out the purpose of  
13 this chapter.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The Washington state women's commission  
15 shall have the following powers:

16 (1) Receive gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private  
17 sources that are made for the use or benefit of the commission and to  
18 expend the same or any income therefrom according to their terms and  
19 the purpose of this chapter. The commission's executive director  
20 shall make a report of such funds received from private sources to  
21 the office of financial management on a current basis. Such funds  
22 received from private sources shall not be applied to reduce or  
23 substitute for the commission's budget as appropriated by the  
24 legislature, but shall be applied and expended toward projects and  
25 functions authorized by this chapter that were not funded by the  
26 legislature.

27 (2) In carrying out its duties, the commission may establish such  
28 relationships with public and private institutions, local  
29 governments, private industry, community organizations, and other  
30 segments of the general public as may be needed to promote equal  
31 opportunity for women in government, education, economic security,  
32 employment, and services.

33 (3) The commission may adopt rules and regulations pursuant to  
34 chapter 34.05 RCW as shall be necessary to implement the purpose of  
35 this chapter.

1        NEW SECTION.     **Sec. 7.**     Sections 1 through 6 of this act  
2     constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

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