STATE OF NEW YORK

2987

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 26, 2021

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to declare racism a public health crisis and to establish a working group to promote racial equity throughout the state

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings and declarations. The legislature hereby finds and declares that racism is a public health crisis that poses a threat to the health, safety, and quality of life to as many as forty-seven million Americans; and that racism negatively impacts and exacerbates health inequities among historically marginalized communities. The legislature further finds and declares that racism contributes to a national disparity between black and white infant mortality rates; and that racism contributes to inequalities in housing, education, and employment, and that racism negatively impacts the lives of people of color in New York. The legislature further finds that race is a social construct not rooted in meaningful biological differences, and this system unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while giving advantages to other individuals and communities. The legislature further finds and declares that the impact of racism on public health deserves action from all levels of government. Therefore, this legislation establishes a working group to address issues related to racism and ensure the health and safety of the citizens of the state.

§ 2. There is hereby established within the office of the state commissioner of health a working group to be known as the "racial equity working group".

§ 3. The working group shall address the issues related to racism as a public health crisis, and biennially, shall study and provide recommendations for legislative or other actions that can be undertaken to reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic disparities, including:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(a) community engagement and tools for government agencies to engage actively and authentically with communities of color;

(b) partnerships in the education, employment, housing, and criminal justice arenas to reduce or eliminate racial or ethnic disparities therein;

(c) measures to promote racially equitable hiring and promotion of all employees;

(d) support of local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to reduce or eliminate racism;

(e) measures to expand understanding of racism and how racism affects individual and population health; and

(f) secure adequate resources to successfully accomplish the aforementioned activities.

§ 4. The working group shall consist of the following:

(a) the state commissioner of health and his or her designee;

(b) one member appointed by the state commissioner of health;

(c) two members appointed by the governor;

(d) one member appointed by the speaker of the assembly;

(e) one member appointed by the temporary president of the senate;

(f) one member appointed by the minority leader of the assembly; and

(g) one member appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

§ 5. The members and staff personnel of the racial equity working group shall serve without compensation, but shall be eligible to receive reimbursement for their reasonable, actual and necessary expenses, provided however, members of the working group representing state agencies may receive reimbursement for their actual and necessary expenses from their respective agencies.

§ 6. For the purposes of this act, the commissioner of health may conduct such annual study in conjunction with any other department, division, board, bureau, commission, agency, or public authority of the state he or she deems necessary. To the maximum extent feasible, the commissioner of health shall be authorized to request, receive, and utilize such resources and data of any other department, division, board, bureau, commission, agency, or public authority of the state as he or she may reasonably request to properly carry out his or her powers and duties pursuant to this act.

§ 7. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall have become a law.