STATE OF NEW YORK

3177

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 28, 2021

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

AN ACT establishing the New York state commission on economic inequality, equal opportunity, and competitiveness

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

Section 1. Legislative intent. It shall be the policy of New York state to work toward reducing economic inequality, eliminating poverty, achieving equal opportunity and full employment, and boosting economic competitiveness and growth for the purpose of justice, equality, democracy, fairness, the general welfare, and strengthening the economy of New York state.

§ 2. A temporary state commission, to be known as the New York state commission on economic inequality, equal opportunity, and competitiveness, is hereby created to investigate, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning how to work toward, in New York state, reducing economic inequality, eliminating poverty, achieving equal opportunity and full employment, and boosting economic competitiveness and growth.

§ 3. (a) The commission shall consist of seventeen members, to be appointed as follows: nine members to be appointed by the governor, one of whom shall be the chair; three members to be appointed by the temporary president of the senate; one member appointed by the senate minority leader; three members appointed by the speaker of the assembly; and one member appointed by the assembly minority leader.

(b) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties under this act. The commission may employ and at pleasure remove such personnel as it may deem necessary for the performance of its functions and fix their compensation within the amounts made available by appropriation therefor.

§ 4. The commission shall investigate:

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

LBD05821-01-1

(a) How to work toward reducing economic inequality in New York state by exploring various topics, including but not limited to:
(1) income inequality;
(2) wealth inequality;
(3) the shrinking middle class;
(4) impacts of the Great Recession;
(5) impacts of tax policy and other related policies;
(6) minimum wage, wage policies and workers' bargaining power; and
(7) the economic and social impact of economic inequality, including as it relates to race, class, gender, age, national origin, and sexual orientation.
(b) How to work toward eliminating poverty in New York state by examining various topics, including but not limited to:
(1) class, race, gender, and poverty;
(2) homelessness;
(3) children and families in poverty;
(4) senior citizens;
(5) education;
(6) nutrition and health;
(7) alcohol and drug addiction;
(8) criminal justice;
(9) safety nets; and
(10) employment.
(c) How to work toward achieving equal opportunity in New York state by examining various topics, including but not limited to:
(1) class, race, gender, and equal opportunity;
(2) employment;
(3) education;
(4) access to capital; and
(5) access to housing, loans, transportation, banking, insurance and various economic areas.
(d) How to work toward achieving full employment in New York state by examining various topics, including but not limited to:
(1) education;
(2) workforce training;
(3) employment opportunities;
(4) wages and livable income; and
(5) entrepreneurialism.
(e) How to boost economic competitiveness and economic growth in New York state by examining various topics, including but not limited to:
(1) education;
(2) workforce development;
(3) tax policy, health care policy, and other policies;
(4) impacts of international trade;
(5) the manufacturing sector; and
(6) emerging technologies and high tech.

§ 5. (a) For the accomplishment of its purposes, the commission may meet and hold public and/or private hearings within or without the state, and shall have all the powers of a legislative committee pursuant to the legislative law. The commission is authorized and empowered to undertake any studies, inquiries, surveys or analyses it may deem relevant through its own personnel or in cooperation with or by agreement with any other public or private agency.

(b) To the maximum extent feasible, the commission may request and shall be entitled to receive and shall utilize and be provided with such facilities, resources and data from any court in the state and from any

subdivision, department, board, bureau, commission, office, agency or other instrumentality of the state or of any political subdivision thereof as it deems necessary or desirable for the proper execution of its powers and duties and to effectuate the purposes set forth in this act.

(c) The commission is hereby authorized and empowered to enter into any agreements and to do and perform any acts that may be necessary, desirable or proper to carry out the purposes and objectives of this act.

§ 6. The commission shall make recommendations and a report of its findings. The commission shall submit such recommendations and report, including any recommendations for legislative action as it may deem necessary and appropriate, to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and make public online on the governor's website no later than December first, two thousand twenty-two.

§ 7. This act shall take effect immediately.