2021 SENATE BILL 825


† AN ACT relating to: creating a task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls and making an appropriation.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill creates a task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls. The task force must be established by the attorney general and must consist of members who are knowledgeable in crime victims rights or violence protection and who work in a range of relevant positions as specified in the bill. The task force must examine various factors that contribute to violence against African American women and girls and submit to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature by December 15, 2022, a report on actions that can be taken to eliminate violence against African American women and girls.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Nonstatutory provisions.

(1) Task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls.
(a) Definition. In this subsection, “nongovernmental organization” means a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that provides legal, social, or other community services.

(b) Membership. Within 45 days of the effective date of this paragraph, the attorney general shall establish a special committee under s. 15.04 (1) (c) called the task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls. The task force shall consist of the following members, who are knowledgeable in crime victims rights or violence protection, and who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the attorney general unless otherwise specified:

1. Two members of the senate, one appointed by the majority leader and one appointed by the minority leader.

2. Two members of the assembly, one appointed by the speaker of the assembly and one appointed by the minority leader.

3. Two representatives from among the following:
   b. The Badger State Sheriffs’ Association.
   c. The division of criminal investigation within the department of justice.

4. One or more representatives from among the following:
   b. A U.S. Attorney’s office in this state.
   c. A judge or attorney working in juvenile court.

5. A county coroner or representative from a statewide coroner’s association or a representative of the department of health services.

6. Three or more representatives from among the following:
SENATE BILL 825

(a) A statewide or local organization that provides legal services to African American women and girls.

(b) A statewide or local organization that provides advocacy or counseling for African American women and girls who have been victims of violence.

(c) A statewide or local organization that provides nonlegal services to African American women and girls.

(d) The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

(e) End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin.

(f) An African American woman who is a survivor of gender violence.

(c) Operation.

1. The task force shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among the members of the task force and may elect other officers as necessary. The task force shall convene within 30 days after it is established and shall meet at least quarterly thereafter, or upon the call of its chair, and may hold meetings throughout the state. The task force shall meet sufficiently to accomplish the duties identified in par. (d).

2. The department of justice shall provide administrative support services to the task force. The task force may call upon any state agency or officer to assist the task force, and those agencies or officers shall cooperate with the task force to the fullest extent possible.

3. The department of administration shall reimburse members of the task force for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in carrying out their functions from the appropriation under s. 20.505 (1) (ka).

(d) Duties.

1. The task force shall examine all of the following topics:
a. The systemic causes behind violence that African American women and girls experience, including patterns and underlying factors that explain why disproportionately high levels of violence occur against African American women and girls, including underlying historical, generational, social, economic, institutional, and cultural factors which may contribute to the violence.

b. Appropriate methods for tracking and collecting data on violence against African American women and girls, including data on missing and murdered African American women and girls.

c. Policies and institutions such as policing, child welfare, coroner practices, and other governmental practices that impact violence against African American women and girls and the investigation and prosecution of crimes of gender violence against African American people.

d. Measures necessary to address and reduce violence against African American women and girls.

e. Measures to help victims, victims’ families, and victims’ communities prevent and heal from violence that occurs against African American women and girls.

2. The task force shall, by December 15, 2022, submit to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature in the manner provided under s. 13.172 (3) an annual report that includes all of the following:

a. Proposed institutional policies and practices that are effective in reducing gender violence and increasing the safety of African American women and girls.

b. Recommendations to eliminate violence against African American women and girls.
c. Recommendations to help victims and communities heal from gender violence and violence against African American women and girls.

3. In accomplishing the tasks in subds. 1. and 2., the task force shall seek out and enlist the cooperation and assistance of nongovernmental organizations, community and advocacy organizations working with the African American community, and academic researchers and experts, specifically those specializing in violence against African American women and girls, representing diverse communities disproportionately affected by violence against women and girls, or focusing on issues related to gender violence and violence against African American women and girls.

(e) Termination. The task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls terminates on the earlier of the date on which the report under par. (d) 2. is submitted or January 1, 2023.

SECTION 2. Fiscal changes.

(1) TASK FORCE ON MISSING AND MURDERED AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND GIRLS.

In the schedule under s. 20.005 (3) for the appropriation to the department of justice under s. 20.455 (3) (a), the dollar amount for fiscal year 2021–22 is increased by $30,000 to operate the task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls. In the schedule under s. 20.005 (3) for the appropriation to the department of justice under s. 20.455 (3) (a), the dollar amount for fiscal year 2022–23 is increased by $30,000 to operate the task force on missing and murdered African American women and girls.