APPROVED
JUNE 21, 2019
BY GOVERNOR

CHAPTER
457
PUBLIC LAW

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN

H.P. 582 - L.D. 777

An Act To Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§74-J is enacted to read:

74-J.

Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations	Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations	Not Authorized	5 MRSA §25001

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA Pt. 31 is enacted to read:

PART 31

RACIAL, INDIGENOUS AND MAINE TRIBAL POPULATIONS

CHAPTER 631

PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF RACIAL, INDIGENOUS AND MAINE TRIBAL POPULATIONS

§25001. Commission established

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations, established by section 12004-I, subsection 74-J and referred to in this chapter as "the commission," is an independent commission. The commission shall promote, implement and coordinate programs that create and improve opportunities and incorporate the goal of eliminating disparities for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations in the State.

§25002. Membership

1. Membership. To the extent possible, the commission must consist of members who represent the diverse racial, indigenous and tribal populations in the State. In making appointments, the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall consider and appoint residents of the State who have a knowledge of problems facing racial, indigenous and tribal populations in the State, who have experience in advocacy relating to racial, indigenous and tribal populations' issues and who provide leadership in programs or activities that create and improve opportunities for racial, indigenous and tribal populations. The commission consists of the following members:

A. Members appointed by the President of the Senate:

(1) A representative of a statewide organization promoting civil rights that has racial justice or racial equity as its primary mission;

(2) A representative of an economic policy organization or other data-focused organization;

(3) A representative of an organization with expertise in legal and policy matters related to public benefit programs that assists individuals with low incomes;

(4) A faculty member of a college or university in this State specializing in the history, the culture or the civil and human rights of historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations; and

(5) A representative of organized labor with expertise in labor rights and working conditions;

B. Members appointed by the Speaker of the House:

(1) A representative of an immigrant or refugee rights organization;

(2) A representative from a housing or homelessness advocacy organization;

(3) A representative of a community development financial institution; and

(4) A representative of a historically disadvantaged racial population of the State;

C. Members appointed by the Governor:

(1) A member of the public representing the faith-based community; and

(2) A member of the public representing youth; and

D. Other members:

(1) A representative from each of the federally recognized Indian tribes in the State.

§25003. Term of office

Members of the commission are appointed for 2-year terms. A member may serve multiple terms.

Members of the commission may serve after the expiration of their terms until their successors have taken office. The Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House may terminate the membership of their respective appointees for good cause. The reason for the termination must be communicated in writing to a member whose membership is terminated. The membership of any member of the commission must be terminated if the member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings without communicating good cause to a chair of the commission.

§25004. Vacancies

A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed serves only for the remainder of that term and must be appointed by the same appointing authority. Any vacancy on the commission does not affect its powers.

§25005. Chair

The commission shall select 3 chairs from among the members of the commission. The chairs are authorized to appoint subcommittees.

§25006. Department input

The commission shall seek input from the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Department of Education, as well as any other experts, in carrying out its duties.

§25007. Duties and powers

1. Commission duties. The commission shall:

A. Carry out research necessary to determine the status of historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations, including the study of income levels of and opportunities available to historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations and the examination of quantitative and qualitative data associated with those populations regarding business ownership, household assets, debts and income, housing, employment, education, health care and access to wealth, capital and benefits;

B. Seek public input by conducting public hearings annually to obtain information about the needs of and solutions to the problems faced by historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations; and

C. Beginning January 1, 2020, and biennially thereafter, report to the Governor and the Legislature concerning the work and interests of the commission, including a summary of public comments obtained pursuant to paragraph B.

2. Commission powers. The commission may:

A. Promote and coordinate activities on state and local levels designed to meet the problems faced by historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations;

B. Inform the public about the presence or absence of opportunities for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations;

C. Conduct additional public hearings, conferences, workshops and other such meetings to obtain information about, discuss and publicize the needs of and solutions to the problems faced by historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations;

D. Submit to the Legislature, at the start of each regular session, such legislation as the commission determines appropriate for improving opportunities and eliminating disparities for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations in the State;

E. Advise and consult with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court and other officials of the State and the Federal Government with respect to state and federal policies, programs and other activities affecting or relating to historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations; and

F. Advise and consult with the Governor and the Legislature about, and assist them in improving, opportunities for historically disadvantaged racial, indigenous and tribal populations.

§25008. Meetings

The commission shall meet at the call of the chairs not less than 4 times each year.

§25009. Administrative support

The Commissioner of Labor shall provide administrative support to the commission as required.

§25010. Federal and state funds

The commission may accept funds from the Federal Government, from a political subdivision of the State or from an individual, a foundation or a corporation and may expend funds for purposes that are consistent with this chapter. Funds received under this section must be deposited in a nonlapsing Other Special Revenue Funds account within the Department of Labor to support the work of the commission.

Sec. 3. Initial members. Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 25003, of those public members first appointed to the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations, one appointed by the Governor, one appointed by the President of the Senate and one appointed by the Speaker of the House must be appointed for one-year terms. The term of office of each member must be designated at the time of appointment.

Sec. 4. Initial report. No later than January 1, 2020, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 74-J shall submit a report that includes the commission's findings and recommendations on the commission's research and consideration of policy proposals pursuant to Title 5, section 25007,

including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.

Sec. 5. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

LABOR, DEPARTMENT OF

Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations N329

Initiative: Allocates funds to allow expenditure of any revenues received.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	**2019-20**	**2020-21**
All Other	$500	$500
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	$500	$500