

ASSEMBLY HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 705

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 12, 2018

The Assembly Human Services Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 705.

This bill establishes the Transgender Equality Task Force, which is charged with assessing the legal and societal barriers to equality for transgender individuals in the State, and providing recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on how to ensure equality and improve the lives of transgender individuals, with particular attention to the following areas: healthcare, long term care, education, higher education, housing, employment, and criminal justice.

The bill provides that the task force shall consist of 17 members as follows: a representative of the Department of Banking and Insurance whose duties or expertise includes insurance and banking services and policies as applied to transgender individuals; a representative of the Department of Human Services whose duties or expertise includes expanding access by minority populations to the department's services or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of departmental programs, policies, or initiatives; a representative of the Department of Health whose duties or expertise includes expanding access by minority populations to clinically appropriate healthcare services or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of healthcare programs, policies, or initiatives; a representative of the Department of Education whose duties or expertise includes protecting the rights of minority students or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of educational programs, policies, or initiatives; a representative of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education whose duties or expertise includes protecting the rights of minority students in the higher education system or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of higher educational programs, policies, or initiatives; a representative of the Division of Civil Rights in the Department of Law and Public Safety whose duties or expertise includes expanding access by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals to the department's services or eliminating discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in the delivery of the division's programs, policies, or initiatives; and a representative of the Department of Children and Families whose duties or expertise includes expanding access by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth to the department's services or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of departmental programs, policies, or initiatives with regard to lesbian,

gay, bisexual, and transgender youth; a representative of the Department of Corrections whose duties or expertise includes protecting the safety of minority populations or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of departmental programs, policies, or initiatives; a representative of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development whose duties or expertise includes expanding access by minority populations to the department's services or eliminating discrimination in the delivery of departmental programs, policies, or initiatives; two public members to be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, one of whom shall be a physician who specializes in transgender health issues, and one of whom shall be a transgender individual; two public members to be appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom shall be a parent or guardian of a transgender individual, and one of whom shall be an attorney specializing in transgender rights; one public member to be appointed by the Governor, who shall be a representative of a social service agency that provides services and supports to transgender individuals; a representative of the American Civil Liberties Union; a representative of Garden State Equality; and a representative of The Gender Rights Advocacy Association of New Jersey.

The bill provides that the task force is to organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members, but not later than the 30th day following the appointment of its members, and that the task force is to select a chairperson from among its members. The bill permits the task force to hold meetings at the times and places it may designate, and provides that a majority of the authorized members of the task force shall constitute a quorum. The bill also provides that the task force may conduct business without a quorum, but may only vote on a recommendation when a quorum is present. Pursuant to the bill, the task force is entitled to receive assistance and services from any State, county, or municipal department, board, commission, or agency, as it may require, and as may be available to it for its purposes, and The Division on Civil Rights in the Department of Law and Public Safety is to provide professional and clerical staff to the task force, as necessary to effectuate the purposes of the bill.

The bill requires that the task force prepare and submit a written report to the Governor and the Legislature, outlining its recommendations for advancing transgender equality in the State, not later than six months after its initial meeting. The bill will expire on the 30th day following the submission of this written report.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 1727 (Vainieri Huttle/Eustace/Pinkin/Jasey), which the committee also reported on this date.