

ASSEMBLY, No. 691

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1996 SESSION

By Assemblyman ZISA and Assemblywoman WEINBERG

1 AN ACT creating the New Jersey Human Relations Council and
2 supplementing chapter 9DD of Title 52 of the New Jersey Statutes
3 and making an appropriation.
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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. a. There is hereby created the New Jersey Human Relations
9 Council, referred to hereinafter as the council, which shall address the
10 problem of bias and violent acts based on the victim's race, color
11 religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or disability. The council
12 shall be a permanent, independent body in but not of the Department
13 of Law and Public Safety.

14 b. The council shall consist of an executive committee which shall
15 include ten public members who shall be representative of the various
16 ethnic; religious; racial; sexual orientation; gender; and disabilities
17 organizations in this State, of whom four shall be appointed by the
18 Governor, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political
19 party; three shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, no more
20 than two of whom shall be of the same political party; and three shall
21 be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, no more than
22 two of whom shall be of the same political party; two members of the
23 Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, no more than one of
24 whom shall be of the same political party; two members of the
25 General Assembly appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly,
26 no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party; two
27 representatives from county human relations commissions representing
28 two different regions of the State appointed by the Governor; and the
29 following ex officio members: the Attorney General of the State of
30 New Jersey; Commissioner of the Department of Education; the
31 Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs; the
32 Commissioner of the Department of Corrections; the Commissioner of
33 the Department of Human Services; the Public Defender; the Director
34 of the Administrative Offices of the Courts; the Director of the
35 Division of Criminal Justice; the Superintendent of the Division of

1 State Police; the Director of the Division on Civil Rights; the President
2 of the County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey; President of the
3 New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police; the President of the
4 Bias Crime Officers Association of New Jersey; a county
5 Superintendent of Schools selected by the Commissioner of the
6 Department of Education; the President of the New Jersey Principals
7 and Supervisors Association; and the President of the New Jersey
8 Education Association.

9 c. Of the public members first appointed to the council, six shall be
10 appointed for a term of three years, two shall be appointed for terms
11 of two years and two shall be appointed for a term of one year. The
12 two county human relations commissions representatives shall be
13 appointed for terms of two years. The legislative members appointed
14 initially under this act shall serve until the end of the legislative session
15 in which the appointment is made. Thereafter, the legislative members
16 shall be appointed for two year terms to coincide with the two year
17 legislative term in which they serve on the council. Thereafter, the
18 public members shall be appointed for terms of three years. Vacancies
19 on the council shall be filled in the same manner as the original
20 appointment but for the unexpired term. A chairperson shall be
21 selected from among the public members of the council. The council
22 shall have the authority to establish subcommittees as it deems
23 appropriate and pursuant to this act.

24 d. Each ex officio member may designate an employee of the
25 member's department or agency to represent the member at hearings
26 of the council. All designees may lawfully vote and otherwise act on
27 behalf of the member for whom they constitute the designee.

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29 2. It shall be the duty of the council:

30 a. to develop policy proposals for the State and assist with
31 coordinating efforts to prevent and deter crimes based upon the
32 victim's race; color; religion; sexual orientation; ethnicity; gender; or
33 physical, mental or cognitive disability;

34 b. to assist in diffusing tensions in communities affected by such
35 crimes;

36 c. to act as a clearinghouse for information and program ideas
37 among the existing county human relations commissions;

38 d. to assist the efforts of the county human relations commissions
39 in relieving tensions within the community;

40 e. to assist in providing training programs for members of the
41 county human relations commissions and other interested community
42 leaders;

43 f. to develop and present a biennial report to the Governor and
44 Legislature on the status of bias and violence based upon race; color;
45 religion; sexual orientation; ethnicity; gender; or physical, mental or
46 cognitive disability;

- 1 g. to establish and maintain a listing of conflict resolution programs
2 and experts to be available as a resource for communities in time of
3 crisis;
- 4 h. to develop in conjunction with law enforcement agencies,
5 including the Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations in the
6 Division of Criminal Justice, and the educational community cultural
7 diversity training for law enforcement personnel;
- 8 i. to assist local communities in establishing local human resources
9 commissions;
- 10 j. to assess changes in local demographics and assist communities
11 in adapting to minority population shifts;
- 12 k. to assist State, county and local government agencies with
13 multi-cultural awareness programs; and
- 14 l. to require that the two representatives from the county human
15 relations commissions report back to the counties in each region
16 regarding the work and activities of the State council.
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- 18 3. The council shall have the following powers:
- 19 a. to conduct public hearings throughout the State;
- 20 b. to establish subcommittees;
- 21 c. to perform fact finding functions and prepare reports on
22 particular issues regarding racial; color; religious; sexual orientation;
23 ethnicity; gender; or physical, mental or cognitive disability; and
- 24 d. to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of any
25 official of this State and its political subdivisions and their
26 departments, boards, bureaus, commissions and agencies as it may
27 require and may expend any funds appropriated or otherwise made
28 available to it.
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- 30 4. The council shall meet and hold hearings at such place or places
31 it shall deem necessary.
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- 33 5. The Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and
34 Public Safety shall assist the council in the performance of its duties.
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- 36 6. The Legislature shall annually appropriate such sums as are
37 necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.
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- 39 7. This act shall take effect immediately.
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42 STATEMENT

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44 This bill would create the New Jersey Human Relations Council,
45 (the council), based upon the recommendations contained in the
46 Report of the Commission on Racism, Racial Violence and Religious

1 Violence. The council shall perform numerous planning and
2 coordinating functions including developing proposals for the State to
3 combat crime based on race, color, religion, sexual orientation,
4 ethnicity, gender, or physical, mental or cognitive disability. The
5 council shall further offer assistance and training to county level
6 human relations commissions and assist the Office of Bias Crimes and
7 Community Relations in its efforts to foster better community relations
8 throughout the State.

9 The council shall consist of ten public members, four legislative
10 members, two county representatives and 16 ex officio members.

11 The two representatives from the county human relations
12 commissions shall report back to the various counties on the work of
13 the State council. The county representatives shall be appointed for
14 two year terms by the Governor. The legislative members are given
15 two year terms coincident with the two year legislative session in
16 which the appointment is made.

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21 Creates New Jersey Human Relations Council to address problems of
22 bias and violent acts.