

SENATE, No. 948

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MARCH 14, 1996

By Senator SINAGRA

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.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
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; three
27 representatives from county human relations commissions representing
28 three different regions of the State appointed by the Governor; and
29 the 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
36 State Police; the Director of the Division on Civil Rights; the President
37 of the County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey; President of the

1 New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police; the President of the
2 Bias Crime Officers Association of New Jersey; a county
3 Superintendent of Schools selected by the Commissioner of the
4 Department of Education; the President of the New Jersey Principals
5 and Supervisors Association; and the President of the New Jersey
6 Education Association.

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

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

26

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

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

32 b. to assist in diffusing tensions in communities affected by such
33 crimes;

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

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

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

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

45 g. to establish and maintain a listing of conflict resolution programs
46 and experts to be available as a resource for communities in time of

- 1 crisis;
- 2 h. to develop in conjunction with law enforcement agencies,
3 including the Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations in the
4 Division of Criminal Justice, and the educational community cultural
5 diversity training for law enforcement personnel;
- 6 i. to assist local communities in establishing local human resources
7 commissions;
- 8 j. to assess changes in local demographics and assist communities
9 in adapting to minority population shifts;
- 10 k. to assist State, county and local government agencies with
11 multi-cultural awareness programs; and
- 12 l. to require that the two representatives from the county human
13 relations commissions report back to the counties in each region
14 regarding the work and activities of the State council.
- 15
- 16 3. The council shall have the following powers:
- 17 a. to conduct public hearings throughout the State;
- 18 b. to establish subcommittees;
- 19 c. to perform fact finding functions and prepare reports on
20 particular issues regarding racial; color; religious; sexual orientation;
21 ethnicity; gender; or physical, mental or cognitive disability; and
- 22 d. to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of any
23 official of this State and its political subdivisions and their
24 departments, boards, bureaus, commissions and agencies as it may
25 require and may expend any funds appropriated or otherwise made
26 available to it.
- 27
- 28 4. The council shall meet and hold hearings at such place or places
29 it shall deem necessary.
- 30
- 31 5. The Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and
32 Public Safety shall assist the council in the performance of its duties.
- 33
- 34 6. The Legislature shall annually appropriate such sums as are
35 necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.
- 36
- 37 7. This act shall take effect immediately.
- 38
- 39

40 STATEMENT

41

42

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

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

8 The council shall have members as follows: Two Assembly
9 members, no more than one of which shall be of the same political
10 party; two Senate members, no more than one of which shall be of the
11 same political party; three representatives from the county human
12 relations commissions representing three different regions of the State.
13 Thus, the council consists of ten public members, four legislative
14 members, three county representatives and 16 ex officio members.

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

21

22

23

24

25 Creates New Jersey Human Relations Council to address problems of
26 bias and violent acts.