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Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Sykes

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SUMMARY

- Creates the Women's Policy and Research Commission and the Women's Policy and Research Center, and specifies the powers and duties of the Commission and the Center.
- Makes an appropriation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Women's Policy and Research Commission

The bill establishes the Women's Policy and Research Commission for the express purposes of promoting the advancement of women and removing barriers to women's equality.¹

The Commission must do all of the following:

1. Establish policies and procedures governing the operation of the Women's Policy and Research Center (see below).
2. Employ an Executive Director for the Center to implement the policies and procedures.
3. Furnish a written report of its activities for the preceding calendar year, not later than February 1 each year, to the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.²

The Commission also may do any of the following:

¹ R.C. 121.34(A).

² R.C. 121.341(A).

1. Hold public hearings to assess the problems and needs of women in Ohio.
2. Create standing or special committees as needed. These standing or special committees must be chaired by a Commission member but may include members who are not Commission members.
3. Sell publications issued by the Commission or the Center.
4. Accept gifts, donations, benefits, and other funds from any public agency or private source to carry out any or all of the Commission's or Center's powers or duties.³

Funding the Commission

The bill specifies that all expenses incurred in carrying out the functions of the Women's Policy and Research Commission, as well as those of the Women's Policy and Research Center, must be paid from Commission funds. The bill creates, in the state treasury, the Women's Policy and Research Commission Fund, and requires that all proceeds from the sale of publications, as well as all gifts, donations, benefits, and other funds, must be deposited into the fund.⁴

Commission membership

The Commission must consist of 15 members including the Governor or the Governor's designee, and other members selected in the following manner:

- The Governor must appoint six members to represent the public, not more than three of whom may be members of the same political party. Members appointed by the Governor may include persons who are active in and knowledgeable about the following areas: health and human services, education, business and industry, science and technology, arts and culture, the promotion of social justice, law and government, and volunteerism.
- The President and Minority Leader of the Senate each must appoint one member of the Senate, and one nonlegislator member to represent the public.
- The Speaker and Minority Leader of the House each must appoint one member of the House, and one nonlegislator member to represent the public.⁵

Qualifications

Each Commission member must be eligible to vote in Ohio. At least two-thirds of the Commission members must be women. The Commission membership must reflect the diversity of Ohio's population with respect to age, race, and ethnic background. The Governor, the President and Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House

³ R.C. 121.341(B).

⁴ R.C. 121.341(C) and (D).

⁵ R.C. 121.34(A) and (B) (first paragraph).

must consult with individuals and organizations that promote the advancement of women to seek their recommendations of persons to serve as public members of the Commission.⁶

Terms

The bill establishes staggered terms. Of the Governor's initial appointments to the Commission, three must be to terms that end one year after the bill takes effect, two must be to terms that end two years after that date, and one must be to a term that ends three years after that date. The initial appointment of the public member by the Speaker of the House must be to a term that ends two years after the bill takes effect, and the initial appointment of the public member by the Minority Leader of the House must be to a term that ends three years after that date. The initial appointment of the public member by the Senate President must be to a term that ends two years after the bill takes effect, and the initial appointment of the public member by the Minority Leader of the Senate must be to a term that ends three years after that date. Thereafter, the terms of office of all public members must be for three years, with each term ending on the same day of the same month as did the term it succeeds.⁷

Appointment schedule

The Speaker and Minority Leader of the House and the President and Minority Leader of the Senate must appoint the legislator members to the Commission within 30 days after the commencement of the first regular session of each general assembly. These members must serve on the Commission until their respective successors are appointed or until they are no longer General Assembly members. A public member who has served two consecutive three-year terms on the Commission is ineligible for reappointment to the Commission until three years have passed since the end of the member's second consecutive three-year term. A legislator member who has served three consecutive terms on the Commission is ineligible for reappointment to the Commission until two years have passed since the end of the member's third consecutive term. Vacancies must be filled in the manner provided for original appointments. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration date of the term for which a predecessor was appointed must hold office as a member for the remainder of that term. A public member must continue in office following the expiration date of the member's term until a successor is appointed or until a period of 90 days has elapsed, whichever occurs first.⁸

Compensation

Commission members receive no compensation, but must be reimbursed for necessary expenses actually incurred in the conduct of their official business.⁹

⁶ R.C. 121.34(B) (second paragraph).

⁷ R.C. 121.34(B) (third paragraph).

⁸ R.C. 121.34(B) (last paragraph).

⁹ R.C. 121.34(C).

Meetings and officers

The Governor must call the first meeting of the Commission within 45 days after all Commission members have been appointed. Thereafter, the Commission must prescribe the manner and the times at which Commission meetings must be called, except that the Commission must meet at least four times annually.

The Commission must choose annually from among its members a chair to preside over its meetings, a secretary to keep a record of its proceedings, and other officers as it considers necessary. A majority of the Commission members constitutes a quorum.¹⁰

Women's Policy and Research Center

The bill also establishes the Women's Policy and Research Center to be under the supervision of the Women's Policy and Research Commission. The Center must do all of the following:

1. Identify, barriers to women's equality through research, data collection, and public hearings.
2. Maintain, and make available to the appropriate appointing authorities, lists of persons qualified for appointment to positions in state government.
3. Educate the public about the status of women and the impact of public policy on women.
4. Issue reports and recommendations to the executive and legislative branches of state government and to the general public regarding women's policy issues.
5. Analyze current and proposed public policies to determine their impact on women, and report the analyses to the appropriate authorities.
6. Help the public and private sectors develop programs and services for women.
7. Encourage collaboration between the Center and other public agencies and institutions on issues of mutual interest to them.

The bill requires the Executive Director of the Center to appoint the Center's employees with the approval of the Commission.¹¹

¹⁰ R.C. 121.34(D).

¹¹ R.C. 121.342.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	03-29-22
