

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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*Memorandum
follows*

OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 3 FY 93/94
DATE January 17, 1994

EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING THE COMMISSION TO PROMOTE
THE UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY IN MAINE

WHEREAS, Maine State Government is committed to protecting individual civil rights, valuing diversity and eliminating bias and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, incidence of bias, discrimination and abuse directed toward individual members of racial, religious and ethnic minorities and the gay/lesbian community continue to occur in Maine; and

WHEREAS, as Maine becomes more diverse, we must implement sound policies that foster a climate that celebrates diversity and encourages tolerance and respect for all Maine's diverse citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN R. MCKERNAN, JR., Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby create the Commission to Promote The Understanding of Diversity in Maine, the organization and functions of which shall be the following:

Membership

The Commission shall consist of twelve members to be appointed by the Governor and to serve at his pleasure. Membership shall include representation from the following diverse population groups: the African-American, Asian, Franco-American, gay/lesbian, Hispanic, Jewish, and Native American communities.

Purpose

The Commission shall examine the shape and scope of diversity in Maine and identify the benefits that increased awareness of diversity provides to our society. The Commission shall examine the diversity of language, culture and customs of citizens of diverse backgrounds in Maine and the barriers they face to foster the development of:

- a) participation in Maine's economic, housing and workplace opportunities, and
- b) broad awareness of Maine's diversity among the citizens of Maine, by raising sensitivity to diversity in our schools and communities, and fairly implementing our myriad social service programs, and
- c) fairness in our justice system, through enhanced protection against crimes of hate, bias or discrimination, and in enforcing our laws and sentences in the courts.

To do this, the Commission shall identify the prevalence of bias and discrimination in public schools, housing, facilities and institutions; educate the public on the nature and effect of bias and discrimination; develop recommendations to reduce the incidence of bias and discrimination based upon race, religion, ethnic and national origin and sexual orientation; and report its findings to the Governor and the 117th Legislature by January 16, 1995.

Officers

The duties and functions of the Commission shall be directed by the Chairperson appointed by the Governor and to serve at his pleasure.

Functions and Duties of the Commission

The Commission to Promote The Understanding of Diversity in Maine may:

- 1) conduct public meetings and public hearings to elicit information regarding acts of bias and discrimination;
- 2) meet and consult with religious leaders, law enforcement officials, representatives of the media, educators, and the general public to study the conditions and circumstances leading to acts of bias and discrimination and to consider the means and methods to prevent this behavior;
- 3) promote the contributions of diverse members of the community;
- 4) develop strategies and policies to encourage initiatives designed to prevent acts of bias and discrimination in the workplace; and
- 5) review the report from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Maine Advisory Council;
- 6) report to the 117th Legislature and the Governor on the Commission's findings and recommendations.

Meetings

The Commission shall meet on a monthly basis at the call of the Chair.

Staffing

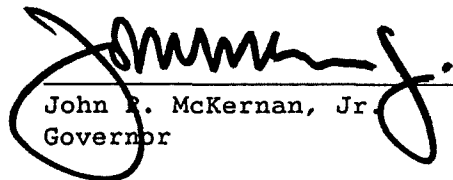
The Commission shall be assisted in its activities by staff assigned by the State Planning Office. The Commission may also call upon the staff and resources of the Department of Attorney General, the Maine Human Rights Commission, the Department of Education, the Department of Public Safety, and any other state agencies that possess the expertise and resources to facilitate the Commission's duties.

Compensation

Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation. Reimbursement of all necessary travel expenditures incurred by members while in the performance of their duties on the Commission which are allowed by State law shall be administered by the State Planning Office.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is January 17, 1994.



John R. McKernan, Jr.
Governor