

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

Legislative Document

No. 777

H.P. 582

House of Representatives, February 12, 2019

**An Act To Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of
Racial and Ethnic Populations**

Reference to the Committee on Labor and Housing suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative TALBOT ROSS of Portland.
Cosponsored by President JACKSON of Aroostook and
Representatives: BROOKS of Lewiston, GATTINE of Westbrook, HARNETT of Gardiner,
HICKMAN of Winthrop, NEWELL of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, TEPLER of Topsham,
WARREN of Hallowell, Senator: CARSON of Cumberland.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§74-J** is enacted to read:

3 **74-J.**

4 <u>Racial and Ethnic</u>	<u>Permanent</u>	<u>Not Authorized</u>	<u>5 MRSA §25001</u>
5 <u>Populations</u>	<u>Commission on the</u>		
6	<u>Status of Racial and</u>		
7	<u>Ethnic Populations</u>		

8 **Sec. 2. 5 MRSA Pt. 31** is enacted to read:

9 **PART 31**

10 **PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC**
11 **POPULATIONS**

12 **CHAPTER 631**

13 **PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC**
14 **POPULATIONS**

15 **§25001. Commission established**

16 The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Populations,
17 established by section 12004-I, subsection 74-J and referred to in this chapter as "the
18 commission," is an independent commission. The commission shall promote, carry out
19 and coordinate programs designed to improve opportunities for racial and ethnic
20 populations in the State.

21 **§25002. Membership**

22 The commission consists of:

23 **1. Members of the Senate.** Two members of the Senate appointed by the President
24 of the Senate, including one member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest
25 number of seats in the Legislature;

26 **2. Members of the House of Representatives.** Three members of the House of
27 Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, including members from each of
28 the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature; and

29 **3. Public members.** The following members representing the public:

30 A. A representative of a community economic development organization appointed
31 by the President of the Senate;

32 B. A representative of an economic policy organization appointed by the Speaker of
33 the House;

1 C. The district director of the Maine District Office of the United States Small
2 Business Administration, or the district director's designee;

3 D. The president of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce or its successor
4 organization, or the president's designee;

5 E. Two members of the public that represent racial and ethnic populations in the
6 State, one of whom is appointed by the President of the Senate and one of whom is
7 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

8 F. Three members of the public appointed by the Governor representing each of the
9 following: the elderly, low-income people and youth.

10 The commission shall invite the participation, as a voting member, of a representative of
11 a federally recognized Indian tribe in the State.

12 In making appointments, the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
13 House shall consider and appoint residents of the State who have a knowledge of
14 problems facing racial and ethnic populations in the State, who have experience in
15 advocacy relating to racial and ethnic populations' issues and who provide leadership in
16 programs or activities that improve opportunities for racial and ethnic populations. The
17 members of the commission must be chosen from throughout the State, and the majority
18 of members must be members of racial and ethnic populations.

19 **§25003. Term of office**

20 Members of the commission are appointed for 2-year terms. A member may serve
21 multiple terms.

22 Members of the commission may serve after the expiration of their terms until their
23 successors have taken office. The Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker
24 of the House may terminate the membership of their respective appointees for good
25 cause. The reason for the termination must be communicated in writing to a member
26 whose membership is terminated. The membership of any member of the commission
27 must be terminated if the member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings without
28 communicating good cause to the chair of the commission.

29 **§25004. Vacancies**

30 A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for
31 which the member's predecessor was appointed serves only for the remainder of that term
32 and must be appointed by the same appointing authority. Any vacancy on the
33 commission does not affect its powers.

34 **§25005. Chair**

35 The Governor shall select a chair from among the members of the commission. The
36 chair is authorized to appoint subcommittees.

1 **§25006. Powers and duties**

2 The commission shall advise and consult with the Governor and the Legislature
3 about, and assist them in improving, opportunities for historically disadvantaged racial
4 and ethnic populations in the State by:

5 **1. Research; policy proposals.** Carrying out research necessary to determine the
6 status of historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic populations in the State and
7 considering policy proposals. The commission shall:

8 A. Study income levels of and opportunities available to historically disadvantaged
9 racial and ethnic populations in the State and examine quantitative and qualitative
10 data associated with those populations regarding business ownership, household
11 assets, debts and income, housing, employment and access to inherited wealth, capital
12 and benefits; and

13 B. Consider policy proposals to diversify business ownership to include historically
14 disadvantaged racial and ethnic populations in the State and to bridge the gaps in
15 wealth acquisition, including, but not limited to, proposals to:

16 (1) Develop a program to provide to aspiring and new business owners technical
17 assistance workshops and training on topics such as the creation of business
18 plans, accessing capital and funding and securing job training;

19 (2) Provide assistance to vendors to become registered with the State and create
20 a clearinghouse to serve as a resource for state-registered vendors seeking
21 government contracts; and

22 (3) Establish an office to coordinate the educational and technical assistance
23 needs of emerging small businesses and to provide information to small
24 businesses seeking to open, operate or expand their businesses;

25 **2. Activities.** Promoting and coordinating activities on state and local levels
26 designed to meet the problems of historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic populations
27 in the State;

28 **3. Advocate.** Serving as an advocate for historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic
29 populations in making recommendations on proposed budgetary, legislative and policy
30 actions to the Governor, the Legislature and other officials of the State and the Federal
31 Government with respect to state and federal policies, programs and other activities
32 affecting or relating to historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic populations in the
33 State;

34 **4. Information.** Informing the public about the presence or absence of opportunities
35 for historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic populations in the State;

36 **5. Meetings.** Conducting public hearings, conferences, workshops and other such
37 meetings to obtain information about, discuss and publicize the needs of and solutions to
38 the problems of historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic populations; and

39 **6. Reports.** Beginning January 1, 2020 and biennially thereafter, reporting to the
40 Governor and the Legislature concerning the work and interests of the commission.

