

Department of Planning and Budget

2020 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB1519

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed

Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. **Patron:** McQuinn

3. **Committee:** General Laws.

4. **Title:** Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination.

5. **Summary:** The bill creates the Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans to (i) study the current impact and long-term inequities of slavery and the subsequent state-sanctioned de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination practiced against African Americans and (ii) make recommendations to the General Assembly on appropriate remedies. The bill requires the Commission to annually submit a report on its interim activity and work to the Governor and the General Assembly. The bill has an expiration date of July 1, 2022.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** See item 8.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Indeterminate.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** There are certain costs that cannot be determined at this time, but there are many identifiable costs as well.

The bill calls for the Commission to do extensive historical and current social scientific research and analysis, recommend policy, and educate the public regarding its findings in a relatively short period of time. According to the Library of Virginia, the agency named in the bill to support and staff the Commission, this calls for an analysis of federal and state legal frameworks, laws, and the effect of those laws on African Americans from the founding of the Virginia colony until the present day. Moreover, it also requires the commission to examine other forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors, thus going well beyond governmental action. Because of the wide chronological and geographic sweep of this mandate, literally thousands of published works on law, history, political science, economics, and other scholarly fields would need to be digested and distilled into a coherent report form or narrative. While the work called for is mostly historical in nature and thus falls within the Library of Virginia's staff expertise, an undertaking of this magnitude will require additional staffing to be properly carried out. The agency estimates that this effort would require approximately 5,760 hours at an estimated cost of \$155,000.

The bill also calls for the examination of current inequalities across a broad range of areas, including housing, employment, education, economic opportunities, generational wealth, voting rights, and criminal justice. Each of these areas are scholarly specializations that would require attention from experts working in those fields. Consultants would be utilized to fulfill this duty because of the wide range of subject expertise required. The Commission

will need to consult with academic and public policy experts and organizations in the fields of education, housing, employment, voting rights, and criminal justice to assess the scope and costs of inequities in these areas. Funding will likely be required to do original analysis where published research is inadequate. These findings will need to be summarized and brought together for the Commission and public review. This will require identifying consultants, defining the scope of work, reviewing and approving work product, and integrating it into useful reports or other forms for public consumption. The agency estimates that this work will require at least 640 hours at an estimated \$17,224. The actual cost of consulting contracts is not included in this amount.

The third duty of the Commission primarily calls for the development of possible ways to address the inequities and legacies identified by the research above. The agency states this could involve additional research, writing and editing support, but that is unknown at this time.

The bill calls for the Commission to recommend appropriate ways to educate the public regarding the Commission's findings. Here the involvement of other educational, cultural, governmental and media organizations will be key. The agency believes this will require the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in diverse communities. As with the management of other legislative commissions, having a dedicated staff person to coordinate and track all of this activity will be key to the quality and timeliness of the final product. Review and approval of work product, and integrating it into useful reports or other forms for public consumption would also be required. It is estimated that this work would require at least 480 hours an estimated cost of \$12,918. The actual cost of any associated consulting contracts is not included in this amount.

The bill calls for the Commission to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual report on the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. Support for this work product is included under the previous paragraph.

The Library is assigned staffing duties for the Commission. The agency states this includes administrative, financial and procurement support for the work of the Commission and is estimated at \$14,655.

The bill charges the Library to reimburse members of the Commission for reasonable and necessary expenses. The agency estimates this cost at \$14,344 per year.

The bill calls for the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia to pay the interim meeting compensation to their respective members on the Commission. The House would be required to pay up to \$2,400 per year to cover two members, while the Senate would pay up to \$1,200 for one member.

- 9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination; the House of Delegates; the Senate of Virginia.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.