

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Commerce and Tourism

BILL: SB 556

INTRODUCER: Senator Altman

SUBJECT: Florida Commission on Poverty

DATE: February 15, 2016

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	McKay	McKay	CM	Favorable
2.			ATD	
3.			FP	

I. Summary:

SB 556 establishes the Florida Commission on Poverty (commission), assigned to the Department of Economic Opportunity, to serve as an advisory board to the Governor and Cabinet, the Legislature, and appropriate state agencies and entities on matters relating to poverty. The commission must conduct a study and develop strategies to address the causes of poverty in Florida, and may procure information and assistance, contract for necessary goods and services, and apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services.

The bill provides for appointment of five voting members and any number of non-voting members to the commission, requires the voting members to be confirmed by the Senate, and provides that members serve 4-year terms. Commission members serve without compensation, but voting members are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses.

The commission must submit an annual report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report must contain an accounting of the commission's activities, and any recommendations by the commission for legislative, administrative, or regulatory reforms for the purpose of mitigating poverty in Florida.

II. Present Situation:

Poverty

The United States Census Bureau (bureau) tracks income and poverty in the United States. The bureau estimates that in 2014 there were 46.7 million Americans living in poverty, which equates to 14.8 percent of the country's population.¹ As of 2014, Florida had approximately 3.2 million

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-252, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014*, p. 12, available at <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-252.pdf> (last visited Feb. 10, 2016).

persons living below the poverty line, with a poverty rate of 16.6 percent, and of Florida's 67 counties, 48 had poverty rates exceeding the national average.²

In order to reduce the number of persons in poverty, some states have created statewide anti-poverty initiatives. The following are examples of such initiatives:

- The Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020 was created in 2006 to develop guidelines to end poverty and prepare recommendations on how to do so.³
- The Speaker of the House of Representatives for Alabama created a poverty task force in September 2007 to identify and assess conditions that create or worsen poverty throughout Alabama and to develop and propose policy initiatives to reduce or eliminate those conditions.⁴
- The Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty was established in 2008 to address poverty in Illinois consistent with international human rights standards, with an initial goal to reduce extreme poverty in Illinois by 50 percent or more by 2015.⁵
- The Child Poverty Prevention Council for Louisiana was created in 2008 to pursue programs to reduce child poverty in the state by 50 percent over the following decade.⁶
- The Connecticut Legislature created a Child Poverty Council in 2004 to develop a 10-year plan to reduce the number of children living in poverty in Connecticut by 50 percent.⁷
- The Rhode Island Legislature created a legislative commission on family income and asset building in 2007 to conduct a comprehensive review of Rhode Island laws, policies, and activities that benefit those in poverty.⁸

Advisory Bodies

Section 20.052, F.S., provides that an advisory body, commission, or board created by specific statutory enactment as an adjunct to an executive agency must be established, evaluated, or maintained in accordance with certain requirements.

Such an advisory body may be created only when it is found to be necessary and beneficial to the furtherance of a public purpose,⁹ and it must be terminated by the Legislature when it is no longer necessary and beneficial to the furtherance of the public purpose.¹⁰ An advisory body may not be created unless:

- Its powers and responsibilities conform with the definitions for governmental units in s. 20.03, F.S.;
- Its members are appointed for 4-year staggered terms; and

² United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, County-level Poverty Data Sets, available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/county-level-data-sets/poverty.aspx> (last visited Feb. 10, 2016).

³ Minnesota Laws 2006, ch. 282, part. 2, s. 27.

⁴ Alabama House of Representatives, Poverty Task Force, Final Report (2008) available at <http://www.clasp.org/documents/PTF-Final-Report.pdf> (last visited Jan. 5, 2016).

⁵ 20 ILL. COMP. STAT. 4080/10 (2008).

⁶ LA, REV. STAT. ANN. s. 46:2801 (2008).

⁷ CONN. GEN. STAT. s. 4-67x (2004).

⁸ 2007 RI H 6561 (2007).

⁹ Section 20.052(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 20.052(2), F.S.

- Its members serve without additional compensation or honorarium, but may receive per diem and reimbursement for travel expenses.¹¹

The private citizen members of an *advisory body* that is adjunct to an executive agency must be appointed by the Governor, the head of the department, the executive director of the department, or a Cabinet officer. The private citizen members of a *commission or board* that is adjunct to an executive agency must be appointed by the Governor unless otherwise provided, must be confirmed by the Senate, and must be subject to the dual-office-holding prohibition of Section 5(a), Article II of the Florida Constitution.¹²

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill establishes the Florida Commission on Poverty (commission) and assigns it to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), which must presumably provide administrative assistance to the commission. The commission serves as an advisory board to the Governor and Cabinet, the Legislature, and appropriate state agencies and entities on matters relating to poverty.

The commission consists of five voting members who must be confirmed by the Senate and who are appointed in the following manner:

- The Governor appoints one voting member;
- The Chief Financial Officer appoints one voting member;
- The President of the Senate appoints one voting member;
- The Speaker of the House of Representatives appoints one voting member; and
- The Florida Association for Community Action, Inc. appoints one voting member.

In addition, the Governor may appoint any number of nonvoting members to the commission who may concurrently hold public office with his or her term of service. All members of the commission must be Florida residents.

Commission members are appointed for 4-year terms, and may be reappointed for successive terms. A vacancy is filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as the original appointment. The bill does not provide for staggered terms.

Members of the commission serve without compensation, but voting members are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses. The commission must annually elect a chair, who must be a voting member, and a vice chair.

The commission must meet at least twice each year at the call of the chair or at the request of a majority of the commission's total voting membership. A majority of the total voting membership constitutes a quorum, and the affirmative vote of a majority of a quorum is necessary to take official action.

¹¹ Section 20.052(4), F.S.

¹² Section 20.052(5), F.S.

The commission must conduct a study and develop strategies to address the causes of poverty in Florida, and to solicit the participation of counties in the study. A county that wishes to participate must submit an application to the commission that outlines current issues relating to poverty in that county. The commission must develop procedures to approve or deny applications for participation.

The bill authorizes the commission to:

- Procure information and assistance from the state or any political subdivision, municipality, public officer, or governmental department or agency thereof;
- Contract for the necessary goods and services; and
- Apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from any local government, state government, or the Federal Government, or an agency thereof, or any other public or private source for the purpose of defraying clerical and administrative costs as may be necessary to carry out its duties.

By January 15 of each year, the bill requires the commission to submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that provides an accounting of its activities and recommendations for legislative, administrative, and regulatory reforms to facilitate efforts in mitigating the existence of poverty in Florida.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. Other Constitutional Issues:

Article II, section 5(a), of the Florida Constitution, provides in relevant part that “[n]o person shall hold at the same time more than one office under the government of the state and the counties and municipalities therein, except that . . . any officer may be a member of a constitution revision commission, taxation and budget reform commission, constitutional convention, or statutory body having only advisory powers.” The exception to the prohibition on dual office-holding for statutory bodies that have only advisory powers would appear to apply to officers appointed to the commission created by the bill.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The bill authorizes the commission to accept funds, grants, gifts, and services from any private source for the purpose of defraying clerical and administrative costs.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill authorizes voting members of the council to receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061, F.S. Those expenses appear to be the responsibility of the DEO.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

Chapter 20, F.S., defines the term “commission” to mean a body created by specific statutory enactment within a department, the office of the Governor, or the Executive Office of the Governor, and *exercising limited quasi-legislative or quasi-judicial powers or both*, independently of the head of the department or the Governor.¹³ Chapter 20, F.S., defines the term “council” to mean an advisory body created by specific statutory enactment and appointed to function on a continuing basis for the study of the problems arising in a specified functional or program area of state government and to provide recommendations and policy alternatives.¹⁴ Though the bill establishes the Florida *Commission* on Poverty, it is established as an advisory board. It therefore appears as though the entity created is a council, instead of a commission, and the bill could be clarified accordingly.

The requirement that commission members be appointed for 4-year terms appears to apply to both voting and nonvoting members. If the intent is otherwise, the bill should be so clarified.

It is unclear whether the vice chair has to be a voting member of the commission.

The bill does not specify standards for the commission to use in evaluating county applications for participation in the commission study.

The bill allows the commission, which is an advisory body, to contract for goods and services, and accept funds. It is unclear why an advisory body would need to undertake those activities.

¹³ Section 20.03(10), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 20.03(7), F.S.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates an unnumbered section of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
