

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8196

To establish an Interagency Task Force to examine the conditions and experiences of Black women and girls in education, economic development, healthcare, labor and employment, housing, justice and civil rights, to promote community-based methods for mitigating and addressing harm and ensuring accountability, and to study societal effects on Black women and girls, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

Ms. KELLY of Illinois (for herself, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. BASS, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Education and Labor, Energy and Commerce, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish an Interagency Task Force to examine the conditions and experiences of Black women and girls in education, economic development, healthcare, labor and employment, housing, justice and civil rights, to promote community-based methods for mitigating and addressing harm and ensuring accountability, and to study societal effects on Black women and girls, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protect Black Women
5 and Girls Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) The United States Commission on Civil
9 Rights (USCCR) advises Congress, as well as the
10 President and the American public, on “discrimina-
11 tion or denials of equal protection of the laws under
12 the Constitution of the United States because of
13 color, race, religion, sex, age, disability, or national
14 origin, or in the administration of justice”.

15 (2) The USCCR routinely has difficulties col-
16 lecting information from Federal agencies despite
17 having the power to take depositions, issue interroga-
18 tories and subpoenas, and broad authority language
19 for the collection of information from Federal agen-
20 cies.

21 (3) The activities mandated herein for the
22 USCCR are explicitly authorized by section 3 of the
23 Civil Rights Commission Act of 1983 (42 U.S.C.
24 1975a).

1 (4) An interagency task force is a task force or-
2 ganized in collaboration with two or more Federal
3 agencies, using government-wide resources, and ex-
4 pertise to—

5 (A) examine a particular problem, issue, or
6 event;

7 (B) discuss strategies as a collective group
8 to address such problem, issue, or event;

9 (C) identify programs, policies, and fund-
10 ing; and

11 (D) make recommendations for changes in
12 public policy.

13 (5) Implicit bias on the basis of race is experi-
14 enced by all Black people, and demonstrated more
15 clearly, in the troubling conditions for Black women
16 and girls in our school discipline policies and the
17 connections to the school-to-prison pipeline for chil-
18 dren of color with disabilities.

19 (6) Black girls are suspended and expelled from
20 school at rates that exceed other girls and all other
21 boys except Black boys.

22 (7) In studying the conditions of confinement
23 for women in prison, Black women are admitted to
24 prison at 3.9 times the rate of White women.

1 (8) Black women and girls are individuals who
2 identify as a woman, female, or femme.

3 **SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON BLACK WOMEN AND**
4 **GIRLS.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
6 the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General,
7 in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human
8 Services, shall establish an Interagency Task Force on
9 Black women and girls (referred to in this Act as the
10 “Task Force”) to carry out the purposes and duties de-
11 scribed in subsections (c) and (d), in compliance with re-
12 quirements and restrictions under law, as applicable, in-
13 cluding those prohibiting discrimination on the basis of
14 race and sex.

15 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force shall consist of
16 members appointed as follows:

17 (1) The head of each of the following agencies
18 shall appoint at least one officer or employee, but no
19 more than two, from a relevant office of the fol-
20 lowing:

21 (A) The Department of Health and
22 Human Services.

23 (B) The Department of Education.

24 (C) The Department of Labor.

25 (D) The National Institutes of Health.

1 (E) The Department of Justice.

2 (F) The Department of Housing and
3 Urban Development.

4 (2) The Attorney General shall appoint the fol-
5 lowing:

6 (A) One officer or employee of the Federal
7 Public Defenders.

8 (B) Two representatives of community-
9 based organizations that have expertise working
10 on culturally specific issues unique to the needs
11 of Black women and girls.

12 (3) The term of a member of the Task Force
13 shall be 4 years, and they shall be eligible for con-
14 secutive reappointment by the head of their respec-
15 tive agency or the Attorney General.

16 (c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Task Force is to
17 examine the conditions and experiences of Black women
18 and girls, to identify and assess the efficacy of policies
19 and programs of Federal, State, and local governments de-
20 signed to improve outcomes for Black women and girls,
21 and to make recommendations to improve such policies
22 and programs as necessary.

23 (d) DUTIES.—The duties of the Task Force are as
24 follows:

1 (1) EDUCATION.—The Task Force shall identify and recommend programs, policies, and incentives for adoption by Federal, State, or local governments with respect to the following:

2 (A) Community-led educational and support programs for Black school-age girls, which shall include the following:

3 (i) Social and emotional learning programs offered in elementary and secondary schools to children in grades 7 through 12, including—

4 (I) affinity spaces for particularly impacted students; and

5 (II) facilitators trained in identity-based dialogue to attend to such an affinity space or social and emotional learning program.

6 (ii) Support for school-age girls who have a parent or guardian who is incarcerated or has a substance use disorder.

7 (iii) Support for a college scholarship fund and programs to increase access to post-secondary education for children of incarcerated parents.

1 (iv) Classroom and after school em-
2 powerment programs for Black girls.

3 (v) Community-led civic engagement
4 and community organizing education.

5 (vi) Classroom and community-led art,
6 theater, and STEM learning centers.

7 (vii) School-based and community-led
8 programs to eliminate the detention and
9 incarceration of school-aged children.

10 (viii) Household access to school-based
11 communication technologies.

12 (ix) School-based or community-based
13 restorative justice programs to address ex-
14 pulsion of girls from school.

15 (x) Curriculum, tutoring, and activi-
16 ties support for homeschooling and virtual
17 learning families.

18 (B) Community-led educational programs
19 for Black women, including providing household
20 access to information and communication tech-
21 nologies to narrow the digital divide and en-
22 hance access to higher education.

23 (C) School-based and neighborhood restor-
24 ative and transformative justice curriculums
25 and spaces.

1 (2) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.—The Task
2 Force shall identify and recommend programs, poli-
3 cies, and incentives for adoption by Federal, State,
4 or local governments with respect to the following:

5 (A) Pre-apprenticeship and career explo-
6 ration programs for careers as skilled building
7 tradeswomen.

8 (B) Programs that award not less than 10
9 percent of their yearly and multi-year contract
10 dollars to Black women-owned businesses on an
11 annual basis.

12 (C) Entrepreneurship and cooperative busi-
13 ness training for Black women.

14 (D) Incidental support for low income
15 Black women workers.

16 (E) Career mentorship for Black women.

17 (F) Support for older Black women work-
18 ers to enter the workforce.

19 (G) Support for Black women who leave
20 the workforce to care for a dependent (such as
21 an elderly relative or child) to re-enter the
22 workforce after a significant absence.

23 (H) Increase in sustainable employment
24 for women headed households.

1 (I) Limitation of barriers to occupational
2 licensure for Black women.

3 (J) Establishment of vocational training
4 and career technical education.

5 (3) HEALTHCARE.—The Task Force shall iden-
6 tify and recommend programs, policies, and incen-
7 tives for adoption by Federal, State, or local govern-
8 ments with respect to the following:

9 (A) Developing a study of the health, in-
10 cluding the mental health, of Black women and
11 girls.

12 (B) Programs to improve maternal health
13 and infant mortality outcomes for Black moth-
14 ers.

15 (C) Neighborhood-based, on demand men-
16 tal health and trauma services.

17 (D) Gender-responsive domestic and inter-
18 personal violence responders.

19 (E) Local neighborhood safe houses.

20 (F) Long-term, on demand, substance use
21 disorder treatment.

22 (G) Neighborhood-based emergency re-
23 sponse teams for women and girls.

24 (H) Access to comprehensive well-women
25 care for Black women and girls, including local

1 testing for mammograms, papsmears, and other
2 medical testing.

3 (I) Local neighborhood COVID-19 testing.

4 (4) JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS.—The Task
5 Force shall identify and recommend programs, poli-
6 cies, and incentives for adoption by Federal, State,
7 or local governments with respect to the following:

8 (A) Reentry assistance and reunification
9 planning and community-based programming
10 for women victims of the war on drugs, sexual
11 or domestic violence, mental illness, or sub-
12 stance abuse.

13 (B) Programs for Black women and girls
14 that promote the treatment of underlying prob-
15 lems instead of incarceration, including the ex-
16 pansion of the use of parole and diversion pro-
17 grams and preventing the incarceration of
18 mothers who are primary caretakers of minor
19 children.

20 (C) Access to legal assistance provided by
21 the Office on Violence Against Women of the
22 Department of Justice for child custody and pa-
23 rental termination proceedings.

24 (D) Funding that enables communities to
25 reimagine community-based programming.

1 (E) Support for formerly incarcerated
2 Black women, in collaboration with community-
3 led organizations.

4 (F) Permitting formerly incarcerated and
5 convicted women (not including incarceration or
6 convictions for violent offenses, human traf-
7 ficking, or sex offenses) to be eligible to serve
8 as a foster parent.

9 (G) Judicial discretion in sentencing and
10 procedures for resentencing.

11 (H) Examination of policies to reform and
12 limit laws requiring mandatory minimum sen-
13 tences.

14 (I) Examination of vacatur and
15 expungement laws for criminal offenses com-
16 mitted by victims of human and sex trafficking.

17 (5) HOUSING.—The Task Force shall identify
18 and recommend programs, policies, and incentives
19 for adoption by Federal, State, or local governments
20 with respect to the following:

21 (A) Increasing access to the following:

22 (i) Permanent and transitional hous-
23 ing for women with children, formerly in-
24 carcerated women, women with disabilities,
25 and elderly women.

1 (ii) Legal representation for women
2 with children and the elderly facing evic-
3 tion.

4 (iii) Homeownership assistance funds
5 for Black women.

6 (B) Increasing accessibility and availability
7 of long-term neighborhood transitional and per-
8 manent supportive housing for Black women re-
9 entering the community following incarceration.

10 (e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days
11 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
12 thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to Congress a re-
13 port on—

14 (1) the activities conducted under this section;
15 and

16 (2) the activities conducted under this section
17 that are ongoing or are in continuation of existing
18 Federal programs, including information on addi-
19 tional work undertaken in response to duties of the
20 Task Force under subsection (d).

21 (f) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than two years
22 after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually
23 thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to Congress, the
24 President, and to each chief executive of a State or local
25 government recommendations on policies, practices, pro-

1 grams, and incentives that may be adopted to improve out-
2 comes for Black women and girls.

3 **SEC. 4. UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS RE-**
4 **PORT ON ISSUES IMPACTING BLACK WOMEN**
5 **AND GIRLS.**

6 (a) DUTIES.—Not later than one year after the date
7 of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the
8 United States Commission on Civil Rights shall conduct
9 a comprehensive study and collect data with respect to the
10 effects on Black women and girls of the following:

11 (1) The lack of contract opportunities with the
12 Federal Government, for Black women.

13 (2) The wage gap and pay equity for Black
14 women in comparison to other individuals.

15 (3) The high maternal mortality rate and the
16 steps needed to reduce such rate.

17 (4) The high infant mortality rate of Black
18 girls.

19 (5) The impact of screening for breast cancer
20 at an earlier age than 40 years of age for Black
21 women.

22 (6) The school-to-prison pipeline and its impact
23 on Black women and girls.

1 (7) Housing stability, homelessness, and access
2 to affordable rental housing and home loans for
3 Black women.

4 (8) The prevalence and rate of violence against
5 Black women and girls, including Black transgender
6 women and girls, and the effect of prevention strate-
7 gies, barriers to service, and increased lethality for
8 these individuals.

9 (9) Excessive use of force by law enforcement,
10 including where death results, against Black women
11 and girls, including Black transgender women and
12 girls.

13 (10) The over-incarceration of Black women
14 and girls, including Black transgender women and
15 girls, in the juvenile and adult justice system.

16 (11) Restoring Federal parole.

17 (12) Establishing a moratorium on building
18 new women’s prisons or jails.

19 (13) Ending contracts for private prisons and
20 electronic monitoring.

21 (14) Repealing of the Adoption Safe Families
22 Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–89; 111 Stat. 2115).

23 (15) Repealing any policy or law that creates
24 barriers to housing or precludes formerly incarcer-

1 ated people from living with family members in pub-
2 lic or private housing.

3 (16) Neighborhood family reunification support.

4 (17) The high rate of sex trafficking of Black
5 women and girls, and the impact of State vacatur
6 and expungement laws for victims of human and sex
7 trafficking.

8 (18) Any additional items described in section
9 3(d) that the Commission determines appropriate.

10 (b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
11 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the
12 United States Commission on Civil Rights shall submit to
13 Congress, the President, and make publicly available on-
14 line, a report outlining the Commission’s activities and
15 findings under subsection (a).

16 (c) INFORMATION SHARING.—All relevant entities of
17 the United States Government, including the Department
18 of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Serv-
19 ices, the Department of Education, the Department of
20 Labor, and the National Institutes of Health, shall provide
21 information to the United States Commission on Civil
22 Rights in order for the Commission to carry out its duties
23 under this section.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as
3 may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

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