

HOUSE BILL 441

By Lamar

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4; Title 56; Title 63; Title 68 and Title 71, relative to perinatal care.

WHEREAS, Tennessee's 2018 infant mortality rate of 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births ranks ninth in the nation according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's 2019 pre-term birth rate is 11.2 percent according to the March of Dimes; and

WHEREAS, the pre-term birth rate among Tennessee's African-American women is 44 percent higher than the rate among all other women in this state according to the March of Dimes; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1.

(a) There is created the African-American infant mortality task force for the purpose of studying infant mortality and pre-term birth rates in African-American women in this state.

(b) The task force is composed of the following nine (9) members:

(1) The commissioner, or the commissioner's designee;

(2) Two (2) representatives appointed by and from the perinatal advisory committee, each of whom holds an advanced degree in either medicine or a social science;

(3) Three (3) medical professionals licensed under title 63, including at least two (2) specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, appointed by the commissioner; and

(4) Three (3) experts in various relevant social science fields, including, but not limited to, psychology and sociology, appointed by the commissioner.

(c) The commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, shall call the first meeting of the task force, at which time, the members must elect a chair. Thereafter, the task force must meet at least five (5) times. The chair, in the chair's discretion, may call additional meetings.

(d) Members of the task force serve without compensation but, when engaged in the conduct of their official duties, are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with uniform regulations promulgated by the department of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(e) Pursuant to § 8-44-108, the task force may participate by electronic or other means of communication for the benefit of the public and the task force in connection with any meeting authorized by law.

(f) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the chair of the health and welfare committee of the senate and the chair of the health committee of the house of representatives no later than July 1, 2022.

(g) The task force ceases to exist upon completion and delivery of the task force's report.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.