

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 6268

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

DECEMBER 14, 2021

Ms. KELLY of Illinois (for herself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) 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 2021”.

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) Black women and girls are individuals who
14 identify as a woman, female, or femme.

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

21 (7) Black girls are suspended and expelled from
22 school at rates that exceed other girls and all other
23 boys except Black boys.

24 (8) 40 percent of all suspected human traf-
25 ficking victims in the U.S. are Black, and Black

1 children account for nearly 51 percent of all juvenile
2 prostitution arrests.

3 (9) In studying the conditions of confinement
4 for women in prison, Black women are admitted to
5 prison at 3.9 times the rate of White women.

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

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

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

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

24 (A) The Department of Health and
25 Human Services.

1 (B) The Department of Education.

2 (C) The Department of Labor.

3 (D) The National Institutes of Health.

4 (E) The Department of Justice.

5 (F) The Department of Housing and
6 Urban Development.

7 (2) The Attorney General shall appoint the fol-
8 lowing:

9 (A) One officer or employee of the Federal
10 Public Defenders.

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

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

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

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

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

7 (A) Community-led educational and sup-
8 port programs for Black school-age girls, which
9 shall include the following:

10 (i) Social and emotional learning pro-
11 grams offered in elementary and secondary
12 schools to children in grades 7 through 12,
13 including—

14 (I) affinity spaces for particularly
15 impacted students; and

16 (II) facilitators trained in iden-
17 tity-based dialogue to attend to such
18 an affinity space or social and emo-
19 tional learning program.

20 (ii) Support for school-age girls who
21 have a parent or guardian who is incarcer-
22 ated or has a substance use disorder.

23 (iii) Support for a college scholarship
24 fund and programs to increase access to

1 post-secondary education for children of in-
2 carcerated parents.

3 (iv) Classroom and after school em-
4 powerment programs for Black girls.

5 (v) Community-led civic engagement
6 and community organizing education.

7 (vi) Classroom and community-led art,
8 theater, and STEM learning centers.

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

12 (viii) Household access to school-based
13 communication technologies.

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

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

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

1 (C) School-based and neighborhood restor-
2 ative and transformative justice curriculums
3 and spaces.

4 (2) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.—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) Pre-apprenticeship and career explo-
9 ration programs for careers as skilled building
10 tradeswomen.

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

15 (C) Entrepreneurship and cooperative busi-
16 ness training for Black women.

17 (D) Incidental support for low income
18 Black women workers.

19 (E) Career mentorship for Black women.

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

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

1 (H) Increase in sustainable employment
2 for women headed households.

3 (I) Limitation of barriers to occupational
4 licensure for Black women.

5 (J) Establishment of vocational training
6 and career technical education.

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

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

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

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

19 (D) Gender-responsive domestic violence
20 (including violence against an intimate partner)
21 and interpersonal violence responders.

22 (E) Local neighborhood safe houses.

23 (F) Long-term, on demand, substance use
24 disorder treatment.

1 (G) Neighborhood-based emergency re-
2 sponse teams for women and girls.

3 (H) Access to comprehensive well-women
4 care for Black women and girls, including local
5 testing for mammograms, papsmears, and other
6 medical testing.

7 (I) Local neighborhood COVID–19 testing.

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

12 (A) Reentry assistance and reunification
13 planning and community-based programming
14 for women victims of the war on drugs, sexual,
15 domestic, or intimate partner violence, mental
16 illness, or substance abuse.

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

24 (C) Access to legal assistance provided by
25 the Office on Violence Against Women of the

1 Department of Justice for child custody and pa-
2 rental termination proceedings.

3 (D) Funding that enables communities to
4 reimagine community-based programming.

5 (E) Support for formerly incarcerated
6 Black women, in collaboration with community-
7 led organizations.

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

13 (G) Judicial discretion in sentencing and
14 procedures for resentencing.

15 (H) Examination of policies to reform and
16 limit laws requiring mandatory minimum sen-
17 tences.

18 (I) Examination of vacatur and
19 expungement laws for criminal offenses com-
20 mitted by victims of human and sex trafficking.

21 (5) HOUSING.—The Task Force shall identify
22 and recommend programs, policies, and incentives
23 for adoption by Federal, State, or local governments
24 with respect to the following:

25 (A) Increasing access to the following:

1 (i) Permanent and transitional hous-
2 ing for women with children, formerly in-
3 carcerated women, women with disabilities,
4 and elderly women.

5 (ii) Legal representation for women
6 with children and the elderly facing evic-
7 tion.

8 (iii) Homeownership assistance funds
9 for Black women.

10 (B) Increasing accessibility and availability
11 of long-term neighborhood transitional and per-
12 manent supportive housing for Black women re-
13 entering the community following incarceration.

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

18 (1) the activities conducted under this section;

19 and

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

1 (f) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than two years
2 after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually
3 thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to Congress, the
4 President, and to each chief executive of a State or local
5 government recommendations on policies, practices, pro-
6 grams, and incentives that may be adopted to improve out-
7 comes for Black women and girls.

8 **SEC. 4. UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS RE-**
9 **PORT ON ISSUES IMPACTING BLACK WOMEN**
10 **AND GIRLS.**

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

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

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

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

22 (4) The high infant mortality rate of Black
23 girls.

1 (5) The impact of screening for breast cancer
2 at an earlier age than 40 years of age for Black
3 women.

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

6 (7) Housing stability, homelessness, and access
7 to affordable rental housing and home loans for
8 Black women.

9 (8) The prevalence and rate of violence against
10 Black women and girls, including Black transgender
11 women and girls, and the effect of prevention strate-
12 gies, barriers to service, and increased lethality for
13 these individuals.

14 (9) Excessive use of force by law enforcement,
15 including where death results, against Black women
16 and girls, including Black transgender women and
17 girls.

18 (10) The over-incarceration of Black women
19 and girls, including Black transgender women and
20 girls, in the juvenile and adult justice system.

21 (11) Restoring Federal parole.

22 (12) Establishing a moratorium on building
23 new women's prisons or jails.

24 (13) Ending contracts for private prisons and
25 electronic monitoring.

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

3 (15) Repealing any policy or law that creates
4 barriers to housing or precludes formerly incarcerated
5 ated people from living with family members in pub-
6 lic or private housing.

7 (16) Neighborhood family reunification support.

8 (17) The high rate of sex trafficking of Black
9 women and girls, and the impact of State vacatur
10 and expungement laws for victims of human and sex
11 trafficking.

12 (18) Any additional items described in section
13 3(d) that the Commission determines appropriate.

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

20 (c) INFORMATION SHARING.—All relevant entities of
21 the United States Government, including the Department
22 of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Serv-
23 ices, the Department of Education, the Department of
24 Labor, and the National Institutes of Health, shall provide
25 information to the United States Commission on Civil

1 Rights in order for the Commission to carry out its duties
2 under this section.

3 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

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

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