

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8604

To establish the Free City Commission to examine the effects of liberal Government policy on American cities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2022

Mr. CAWTHORN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To establish the Free City Commission to examine the effects of liberal Government policy on American cities, 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 “Free City Commission
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE OF COMMISSION.**

7 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the
8 legislative branch a commission to be known as the “Free
9 City Commission” (referred to in this Act as the “Com-
10 mission”).

1 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Commission is to
2 study the effects of progressive governance on cities within
3 the United States over the last 75 years.

4 **SEC. 3. COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION.**

5 (a) MEMBERS.—

6 (1) APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be
7 composed of 20 members, to be appointed not later
8 than 30 days after the date of enactment of this
9 Act, of whom—

10 (A) 5 members shall be appointed by the
11 majority leader of the Senate;

12 (B) 5 members shall be appointed by the
13 minority leader of the Senate;

14 (C) 5 members shall be appointed by the
15 Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

16 (D) 5 members shall be appointed by the
17 minority leader of the House of Representa-
18 tives.

19 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members appointed
20 under subsection (a) shall consist of individuals with
21 expertise in any of the issues described in para-
22 graphs (1) through (10) of section 6.

23 (3) LIMITATION.—An individual appointed to
24 the Commission may not be an officer or employee
25 of the Federal Government.

1 (4) CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND MEETINGS.—Not
2 later than 30 days after the date on which a simple
3 majority of the members of the Commission are ap-
4 pointed under paragraph (1), such members shall
5 meet to elect a chair and vice chair from among
6 such members and shall determine a schedule of
7 Commission meetings.

8 (b) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission shall meet
9 and begin the operations of the Commission not later than
10 30 days after the appointment of a simple majority of
11 members of the Commission.

12 (c) QUORUM AND VACANCY.—

13 (1) QUORUM.—A simple majority of the mem-
14 bers of the Commission shall constitute a quorum,
15 but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

16 (2) VACANCY.—Any vacancy in the Commission
17 shall not affect its powers and shall be filled in the
18 same manner in which the original appointment was
19 made.

20 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF COMMISSION.**

21 The Commission shall, with respect to cities in the
22 United States during the 75-year period preceding the
23 date of enactment of this Act—

- 1 (1) examine the causal link between permissive
2 drug policies and the increase in drug violence and
3 drug usage;
- 4 (2) examine the effects of a lack of educational
5 opportunities;
- 6 (3) evaluate the success of law enforcement tac-
7 tics in preventing violence and protecting civilians;
- 8 (4) examine the prevalence of abortion in mi-
9 nority communities;
- 10 (5) examine the failures of public schools in
11 urban environments;
- 12 (6) evaluate the success of opportunity zones;
- 13 (7) the link between home ownership and com-
14 munity stability;
- 15 (8) investigate mental health;
- 16 (9) study signs of civic engagement like voting
17 and parental involvement in schools;
- 18 (10) investigate public health markers like
19 chronic disease and sexual health;
- 20 (11) rates of religious affiliation, participation,
21 and belief in these communities; and
- 22 (12) not later than 18 months after the date of
23 enactment of this Act, submit a report on the find-
24 ings under paragraphs (1) through (11) to the indi-
25 viduals described in section 6(b)(2).

1 **SEC. 5. POWERS OF COMMISSION.**

2 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such
3 hearings, meet and act at such times and places, and re-
4 ceive such evidence as may be necessary to carry out the
5 functions of the Commission.

6 (b) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may ac-
8 cess, to the extent authorized by law, from any exec-
9 utive department, bureau, agency, board, commis-
10 sion, office, independent establishment, or instru-
11 mentality of the Federal Government such informa-
12 tion, suggestions, estimates, and statistics as the
13 Commission considers necessary to carry out this
14 Act.

15 (2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—On written
16 request of the chair of the Commission, each depart-
17 ment, bureau, agency, board, commission, office,
18 independent establishment, or instrumentality shall,
19 to the extent authorized by law, provide the re-
20 quested information to the Commission.

21 (3) RECEIPT, HANDLING, STORAGE, AND DIS-
22 SEMINATION.—Information shall only be received,
23 handled, stored, and disseminated by members of
24 the Commission and its staff consistent with all ap-
25 plicable statutes, regulations, and Executive orders.

26 (c) ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

1 (1) GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.—On
2 request of the chair of the Commission, the Adminis-
3 trator of General Services shall provide to the Com-
4 mission, on a reimbursable basis, administrative sup-
5 port and other assistance necessary for the Commis-
6 sion to carry out its duties.

7 (2) OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—In
8 addition to the assistance provided for under para-
9 graph (1), departments and agencies of the United
10 States may provide to the Commission such assist-
11 ance as they may determine advisable and as author-
12 ized by law.

13 (d) CONTRACTING.—The Commission may enter into
14 contracts to enable the Commission to discharge its duties
15 under this Act.

16 (e) DONATIONS.—The Commission may accept, use,
17 and dispose of donations of services or property.

18 (f) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
19 the United States mails in the same manner and under
20 the same conditions as a department or agency of the
21 United States.

22 **SEC. 6. STAFF OF COMMISSION.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The chair of the Commission, in
24 consultation with the vice chair, in accordance with rules
25 agreed upon by the Commission, may appoint and fix the

1 compensation of a staff director and such other personnel
2 as may be necessary to enable the Commission to carry
3 out its functions, in accordance with the provisions of title
4 5, United States Code, except that no rate of pay fixed
5 under this subsection may exceed the equivalent of that
6 payable for a position at level V of the Executive Schedule
7 under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

8 (b) STAFF OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request
9 of the chair of the Commission, the head of any executive
10 department, bureau, agency, board, commission, office,
11 independent establishment, or instrumentality of the Fed-
12 eral Government may detail, without reimbursement, any
13 of its personnel to the Commission to assist it in carrying
14 out its duties under this Act. Any detail of an employee
15 shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status
16 or privilege.

17 (c) CONSULTANT SERVICES.—The Commission is au-
18 thorized to procure the services of experts and consultants
19 in accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United States
20 Code, but at rates not to exceed the daily rate paid a per-
21 son occupying a position at level IV of the Executive
22 Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States
23 Code.

1 **SEC. 7. TRAVEL EXPENSES.**

2 Each member of the Commission shall serve without
3 compensation, but shall receive travel expenses, including
4 per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with applica-
5 ble provisions in the same manner as persons employed
6 intermittently in the Government service are allowed ex-
7 penses under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

8 **SEC. 8. FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT APPLICA-**
9 **BILITY.**

10 The provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee
11 Act shall apply to the Commission, including the staff of
12 the Commission.

13 **SEC. 9. REPORTS OF COMMISSION; TERMINATION.**

14 (a) OTHER REPORTS AND INFORMATION.—

15 (1) REPORTS.—The Commission may issue ad-
16 ditional reports as the Commission determines nec-
17 essary.

18 (2) INFORMATION.—The Commission may hold
19 public hearings to collect information and shall make
20 such information available for use by the public.

21 (b) FINAL REPORT.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall, not
23 later than 18 months after the date of its first meet-
24 ing, submit to the individuals described in paragraph

25 (2) a final report containing specific findings, con-
26 clusions, and recommendations required under this

1 Act as have been agreed to by a majority of Com-
2 mission members.

3 (2) INDIVIDUALS.—The individuals described in
4 this paragraph are the President, the Secretary of
5 Health and Human Services, the Attorney General,
6 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the mi-
7 nority leader of the House of Representatives, the
8 majority leader of the Senate, and the minority lead-
9 er of the Senate.

10 (c) TERMINATION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, and all the
12 authorities of this Act, shall terminate on the date
13 that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this
14 Act.

15 (2) RECORDS.—Not later than the date of ter-
16 mination of the Commission under paragraph (1),
17 all records and papers of the Commission shall be
18 delivered to the Archivist of the United States for
19 deposit in the National Archives.

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