Sponsored by:
Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)
Senator RONALD L. RICE
District 28 (Essex)
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senators Pou, Turner, Greenstein and Singleton

SYNOPSIS
Requires Civil Services Commission to undertake various initiatives to increase diversity and inclusivity within law enforcement agencies.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning diversity and inclusivity within law enforcement agencies in this State and supplementing P.L.1948, c.439 (C.52:17B-1 et seq.).

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. The Civil Service Commission shall conduct, or select a qualified vendor to conduct, within one year following enactment of this act, P.L. , c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), an analysis of the racial composition of law enforcement agencies in this State, with the goal of identifying those agencies that might benefit most from eliminating any preference in hiring based upon residency.
   b. In conducting the analysis, the commission or vendor shall, to the greatest extent possible:
      (1) examine the racial composition of law enforcement agencies;
      (2) examine the salaries of law enforcement officers;
      (3) analyze and compare the data obtained pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection;
      (4) examine the variances in salaries based upon geography and socioeconomic factors; and
      (5) examine how residency hiring preferences affect the incidence of diversity in law enforcement agencies.
   c. Based upon the analysis, the commission shall consider whether the practice of removing eligibles from certain lists based upon residency should be discontinued.
   d. The commission shall present the analysis to the Governor and to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1).

2. a. For the purposes of this section, “low-income community” means any population census tract in which:
   (1) the poverty rate for such tract is at least 20 percent, or
   (2) (a) in the case of a tract not located within a metropolitan area, the median family income for such tract does not exceed 80 percent of statewide median family income, or
   (b) in the case of a tract located within a metropolitan area, the median family income for such tract does not exceed 80 percent of the greater of statewide median family income or the metropolitan area median family income.
   b. The Civil Service Commission shall create a program with a goal of achieving at least one of the following two objectives:
      (1) sponsoring free or low-cost preparatory courses for the entry level law enforcement examination for residents of any low-income community or of any municipality in this State with at least one “qualified opportunity zone” as determined under 26 U.S.C. 1400Z-1; or
(2) providing, securing, or identifying scholarships for alternate route programs or preparatory courses for the entry level law enforcement examination for residents of any low-income community or of any municipality in this State with at least one “qualified opportunity zone” as determined under 26 U.S.C. 1400Z-1.

The commission, or a designee thereof, is authorized to receive gifts, grants, or other financial assistance from private sources for the purpose of sponsoring the courses or funding the scholarships offered pursuant to this section, and entering into agreements related thereto with private sources, including but not limited to non-governmental, non-profit, educational, or charitable entities or institutions.

c. The commission may promulgate regulations to effectuate the provisions of this section which shall be effective immediately upon filing with the Office of Administrative Law for a period not to exceed 18 months, and may, thereafter, be amended, adopted or readopted in accordance with the provisions of the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Civil Services Commission to undertake various initiatives to increase diversity and inclusivity within law enforcement agencies.

The bill directs the Civil Service Commission to conduct, or hire a qualified vendor to conduct, an analysis of the racial composition of law enforcement agencies in this State. The goal of the analysis would be to identify the agencies that might benefit most from eliminating the preference in hiring based upon residency.

In conducting the analysis, the commission or vendor is to:

(1) examine the racial composition of law enforcement agencies;
(2) examine the salaries of law enforcement officers;
(3) analyze and compare the data from (1) and (2);
(4) examine the variances in salaries based upon geography and socioeconomic factors; and
(5) examine how residency hiring preferences affect the incidence of diversity in law enforcement agencies.

The bill also directs the commission to create a program with the goal of achieving at least one of the following two objectives:

(1) sponsoring free or low-cost preparatory courses for the entry level law enforcement examination for residents of any low-income community, as defined in the bill, or of any municipality with at least one “qualified opportunity zone,” as identified under federal regulations; or
(2) providing, securing, or identifying scholarships for alternate route programs or preparatory courses for the entry level law enforcement examination for residents of any low-income community or “qualified opportunity zone.”

The bill authorizes the commission to receive gifts, grants, or other financial assistance from private sources to fund these courses or scholarships.