

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS15253-ML-90

Short Title: Taskforce on Missing BIPOC Women. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Murdock, Smith, and Applewhite (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE ON MISSING WOMEN AND GIRLS WHO ARE
BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR (BIPOC) TO DEVELOP POLICY
CHANGES THAT WILL WORK TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF CARE AND CONCERN
FOR MISSING AND MURDERED BIPOC WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH STATE
GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Findings. – The General Assembly finds all of the following:

- (1) According to a 2020 report by the Women's Media Center there are 64,000-75,000 missing black women and girls across the United States.
- (2) Cases involving black women and girls often do not receive the attention they need and there are often barriers to families reporting a loved one, such as mistrust of police, and racial disparities in how law enforcement treat disappearances.
- (3) The tens of thousands of black women and girls who are missing include abductees, sex trafficking victims, and runaways. Black women and girls exist at the intersection of racism and sexism, and often face worse health, wealth, housing, education, and employment outcomes.
- (4) Black girls comprise over forty percent (40%) of domestic sex trafficking victims in the United States.
- (5) Law enforcement often categorize missing black girls as runaways and fail to treat their cases with urgency.
- (6) According to a 2020 report by the Sovereign Bodies Institute, a nonprofit, indigenous-led research organization, at least 2,306 missing Native American women and girls have gone missing in the last 40 years in the United States, about 1,800 of whom were killed or vanished.
- (7) Systemic vulnerability and compounding suppressions have resulted in mass amounts of disappeared indigenous peoples, with the National Congress of American Indians finding that an estimated forty percent (40%) of women who are victims of sex trafficking identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, or First Nations.
- (8) Families of Native American women and girls who have gone missing report a lack of cultural awareness, systemic racism and sexism, and widespread apathy by law enforcement and express frustration that their cases are not pursued.



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(9) There is not comprehensive state or federal data about missing and murdered Native Americans. Advocates argue that poor record keeping, racial misclassification, adverse relationships between tribal governments and outside law enforcement have led to an underreporting of cases.

(10) Latinx individuals are underrepresented or misclassified in crime and missing person statistics because they are often categorized as "White" in official reporting systems. This classification issue has major implications for visibility, resource allocation, and data accuracy regarding missing persons.

SECTION 2. Establishment. – There is established a Task Force on Missing Women and Girls who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

SECTION 3. Composition. – The Task Force established in Section 2 of this act shall consist of the following members:

(1) The Senior Director for Child, Family, and Adult Services of the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, or the Director's designee.

(2) The Secretary of the Department of Public Safety, or the Secretary's designee.

(3) The Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, or the Director's designee.

(4) Two members at large appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(5) Two members at large appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(6) One member at large appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

(7) One member at large appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

SECTION 4. At Large Member Requirements. – At large members appointed in accordance with Section 3 of this act shall be representative of the communities experiencing the crisis described in Section 1 of this act, including directly impacted individuals, reflect the diversity of this State, and have experience in cultural competency.

SECTION 5. Duties. – The Task Force shall have all of the following duties:

(1) Develop policy changes that will work to address the lack of care and concern for missing and murdered BIPOC women and girls with State governmental agencies, including identifying policies to ensure first responders are culturally competent.

(2) Advance the knowledge of communities on the severity of BIPOC women and girls who are missing and murdered.

(3) Ensure BIPOC communities are educated and trained on the prevention, protection, and protocols relating to missing BIPOC women and girls as it relates to social media.

(4) Develop a strategy to collect statistics, demographics, surveys, oral histories, and data analysis.

(5) Recommend preventive programming and ideas to advance the safety of women and girls, including policies that address the overlapping forms of oppression faced by BIPOC women and girls.

(6) Identify major traffic hubs, highways, and resource extraction sites that lead to or are responsible for the facilitation of the abduction of BIPOC women and girls.

(7) Create a Statewide awareness campaign.

SECTION 6. Public Input. – In carrying out the duties set forth in Section 5 of this act, the Task Force shall seek public input by holding public hearings in each region of the State and accepting public input in writing.

SECTION 7. Meeting Location; Expenses. – The Task Force may meet at various locations around the State in order to promote greater public participation in its deliberations and

1 to accommodate the travel considerations of the members. The Legislative Services Commission
2 shall grant adequate meeting space to the Task Force in the State Legislative Building or the
3 Legislative Office Building. The Legislative Services Commission shall allocate from a portion
4 of the funds appropriated to the General Assembly sufficient funds for the operation of the Task
5 Force. The Task Force may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided
6 by G.S. 120-32.02. Members of the Task Force shall receive subsistence and travel expenses at
7 the rates provided in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

8 **SECTION 8.** Report. – On or before two years after the effective date of this act, the
9 Task Force shall submit to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
10 Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of
11 Representatives a report containing its findings and recommendations. The report required under
12 this section shall be made available to the public.

13 **SECTION 9.** Effective and Termination Dates. – This act is effective when it
14 becomes law. The Task Force shall terminate three years after the effective date of this act.