

1 H.159

2 Representative Mulvaney-Stanak of Burlington moves that the bill be  
3 amended by striking out Secs. 18–19 in their entireties and inserting in lieu  
4 thereof new Secs. 18 to read:

5 Sec. 18. STATE BIPOC BUSINESS ~~NETWORK~~ DEVELOPMENT

6 (a) Intent.

7 (1) Racial wealth disparities are a function of not only access to income,  
8 but also the ability to start and sustain a business, access land, and own  
9 property.

10 (2) Vermont embraces its responsibility to course correct the historical  
11 impact of economic exploitation and exclusion from opportunity due to race  
12 and ethnicity for American descendants of slavery and the broader Black,  
13 Indigenous, and Persons of Color community.

14 (3) In order to rectify this history of inequity, it is the intent of this  
15 General Assembly to acknowledge and address wealth disparity and cultural  
16 disempowerment by creating economic opportunity and cultural  
17 empowerment, using new systems that empower Vermonters who have  
18 historically suffered from discrimination and lacked equal access to public or  
19 private economic benefits due to race, ethnicity, geography, language  
20 preference, and immigrant or citizen status.

21 (b) Findings.

1           (1) The Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity conducted a  
2           survey of BIPOC businesses after the Emergency Recovery Grant programs  
3           closed. The survey analysis included three core recommendations: form a  
4           state BIPOC Commission, create a BIPOC business association, and improve  
5           data collection and the State’s understanding of BIPOC business needs.

6           (2) The Committee sought information from over a dozen BIPOC  
7           business and community and State leaders to learn what BIPOC businesses  
8           need to be economically successful in Vermont. Core findings included:

9                   (A) allow BIPOC businesses to lead and define **the formation of a**  
10                   **BIPOC business network** **how to strengthen economic development for**  
11                   **BIPOC-owned businesses and what organizational structures would best**  
12                   **support the Vermont BIPOC business community;**

13                   (B) offer more support to BIPOC businesses by assisting them in  
14                   procuring State contracts, securing capital investment and customer  
15                   cultivation, and finding technical support;

16                   (C) improve language access and cultural competency practices  
17                   within State economic development programs and strengthen connections to  
18                   BIPOC businesses; and

19                   (D) improve State data collection to better serve the variety of  
20                   identities represented within the BIPOC community.

1           (3)(A) The Secretary of State, in cooperation with the Agency of Digital  
2           Services, is leading the development project for the creation of a business  
3           portal to deliver a single point of entry for Vermont businesses to interact with  
4           the State across multiple agencies and departments.

5           (B) When the portal becomes active, which is projected to occur in  
6           2022, the Secretary of State will collect data on race, ethnicity, and gender for  
7           individuals registering businesses.

8           (c) BIPOC business network development project.

9           (1)(A) In fiscal year 2022, the amount of \$100,000.00 is appropriated  
10           from the General Fund to the Agency of Commerce and Community  
11           Development to provide funding for a contractor of not more than \$100,000.00  
12           to convene BIPOC businesses, organizations, and community leaders, other  
13           business organizations, and representatives from the Agency of Commerce and  
14           Community Development and other State agencies and departments as  
15           necessary, to create a set of recommendations on how to launch a State BIPOC  
16           business network support BIPOC business development, which may include  
17           the creation of a BIPOC business network, the creation of minority business  
18           development center or authority, or one or more other similar entities or  
19           organizations.

20           (B) Not more than five percent of the amount appropriated in this  
21           section may be used for administrative purposes, including translation services.

1           (2) The Executive Director of Racial Equity and the Racial Equity  
2           Advisory Panel, with the collaboration and support of the Agency of  
3           Commerce and Community Development, shall:  
4           (A) issue a request for proposals on or before August 15, 2021;  
5           (B) review and select a contractor on or before September 15, 2021;  
6           and  
7           (C) finalize hiring and ensure the contractor begins work on or before  
8           October 15, 2021.  
9           (3)(A) The request for proposals shall include the following  
10           requirements for a qualified contractor:  
11           (i) demonstrated experience working with BIPOC businesses,  
12           populations, or both;  
13           (ii) knowledge of the Vermont business industries and  
14           concentrations of BIPOC-owned businesses;  
15           (iii) proposal on how to convene stakeholders, provide  
16           information, and conduct outreach that includes language access for limited  
17           English-proficient individuals;  
18           (iv) economic and business development expertise; and  
19           (v) experience in organizational structures.  
20           (B) In making their selection, the Panel, Executive Director, and  
21           Agency shall give priority to a contractor with experience working with

1 BIPOC-owned businesses and knowledge of the Vermont business  
2 community.

3 (C) The Agency shall cause the request for proposals to be translated  
4 upon request of a potential applicant.

5 (4)(A) On or before ~~January~~ February 15, 2022, the contractor shall  
6 deliver to ~~the Panel, the Director,~~ the Agency and to legislative committees of  
7 jurisdiction a preliminary report on financial resources and policy changes  
8 needed to support BIPOC business development.

9 (B) On or before July 1, 2022, the contract shall submit a final report  
10 summarizing the process and deliberations, and a final set of recommendations  
11 on how the State can support the formation of a BIPOC business network,  
12 including financial resources needed and policy changes what entities,  
13 organizations, or other measures will best support BIPOC business  
14 development.

15 (d) Collection of data.

16 (1) The Secretary of State shall collect race, ethnicity, and gender data  
17 for individuals registering businesses in the State of Vermont as part of its  
18 business portal.

19 (2) The Secretary shall provide data from the portal to the Secretary of  
20 Administration, which shall make the data available to relevant agencies and  
21 departments within State government to inform economic development policy

1 priorities and strategies as it relates to BIPOC- and women/gender non-binary-  
2 owned businesses and their needs as businesses and employers.  
3 (3) Once completed, the Secretary of State shall incorporate  
4 recommendations related to data collection from the BIPOC business  
5 development project created in this section.  
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7  
8 and by renumbering the remaining sections to be numerically correct.