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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

H.B. 269  
133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

## Bill Analysis

**Version:** As Introduced

**Primary Sponsors:** Reps. A. Miller and Crawley

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### SUMMARY

- Establishes the Commission on Somali and East African Affairs.
- Establishes the Office of Somali and East African Affairs.
- Appropriates \$125,000 in FY2020 and \$125,000 in FY2021 to support the Commission.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Commission on Somali and East African Affairs

The bill creates the Commission on Somali and East African Affairs to serve the general interests of Somali and East African people, and appropriates \$125,000 in FY2020 and \$125,000 in FY2021 for the operating expenses of the Commission.

#### Duties

The Commission has the following duties:

- Gather and disseminate information and conduct hearings, conferences, investigations, and special studies on problems and programs concerning Somali and East African people;
- Secure appropriate recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of Somali and East African people to Ohio;
- Stimulate public awareness of the problems of Somali and East African people by conducting a program of public education;
- Develop, coordinate, and assist other public and private organizations that serve Somali and East African people, including the conducting of training programs for community leadership and service project staff;

- Advise the Governor, General Assembly, and state departments and agencies of the nature, magnitude, and priorities of the problems of Somali and East African people;
- Advise the Governor, General Assembly, and state departments and agencies on, and assist in the development and implementation of, comprehensive and coordinated policies, programs, and procedures focusing on the special problems and needs of Somali and East African people, especially in the fields of education, employment, energy, health, housing, welfare, and recreation;
- Propose new programs concerning Somali and East African people to public and private agencies and evaluate for such agencies existing programs or prospective legislation concerning Somali and East African people;
- Review and approve grants to be made from federal, state, or private funds that are administered or subcontracted by the Office of Somali and East African Affairs;
- Review and approve the annual report prepared by the Office of Somali and East African Affairs;
- Provide and coordinate the exchange of information relative to the needs of Somali and East African people and promote the delivery of state services to such people.<sup>1</sup>

## **Membership**

The Commission consists of 15 members – 11 are voting and four are nonvoting. The Governor must appoint the voting members with the advice and consent of the Senate; the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate each recommend two appointees to the Governor and the minority leaders of the House and Senate each recommend one appointee to the Governor. The four nonvoting members are General Assembly members; two are appointed by the Speaker (one from the majority party and one from the minority party) and two are appointed by the President (one from the majority party and one from the minority party).

## **Qualifications**

All members of the Commission must be United States nationals or lawful permanent residents, and must have cultural, academic, economic, or other significant ties to Somalia and other nations of East Africa. The 11 voting members must be balanced numerically and geographically from urban, suburban, and rural areas that represent Somalia and other East African nations.

## **Terms**

Each member serves a three-year term, except initially the term lengths vary to create a staggering of the terms – three members' terms end October 1, 2020, four end October 1, 2021, and four end October 1, 2022; the members must "draw lots" at the first meeting to

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 121.341; Section 3 of the bill.

determine their term ending dates. If a member's term ends but the member's successor has not begun serving on the Commission, the member must continue with the Commission for up to 60 days until the successor begins serving. General Assembly members serving on the Commission cannot remain on the Commission if they are no longer members of the General Assembly. Finally, the Governor, Speaker, and President must fill any vacancy of a member they originally appointed; the member appointed to fill the vacancy serves only for the duration of the term of the original member.

## **Organization**

The Commission must meet at least four times each calendar year, must select a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other officers as necessary, and must adopt rules governing its procedures. The Commission must act by concurrence of six of the voting members, which constitute a quorum.

## **Compensation**

The voting members of the Commission receive compensation "for work for each day that the member is actually engaged in the performance of work as a member," but the bill limits compensation to one day per month.<sup>2</sup> Voting members also are entitled to reimbursement for all actual and necessary expenses they incur in the performance of their Commission duties.<sup>3</sup>

## **Office of Somali and East African Affairs**

The bill also creates the Office of Somali and East African Affairs to serve the Commission.

## **Duties**

In addition to any tasks the Commission assigns to the Office, the Office must:

- Compile information and provide advice to the Commission about solutions to the problems of Somali and East African people;
- Serve as a clearinghouse to review and comment on all proposals to meet the needs of Somali and East African people that are submitted to it by public and private agencies;
- Apply for and accept grants and gifts from governmental and private sources to be administered by the Office or subcontracted to local agencies;
- Monitor and evaluate all programs subcontracted to local agencies by the Commission;
- Endeavor to assure that Somali and East African people have access to decision-making bodies in all state and local governmental departments and agencies;

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<sup>2</sup> Under R.C. 124.15, not in the bill; the Director of Administrative Services establishes the rate and method of payment for the Commission members' compensation.

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 121.34.

- Submit a full written annual report of its activities, accomplishments, and recommendations to the Commission;
- Establish advisory committees on special subjects as needed to facilitate and maximize community participation in the operation of the Commission. The committees must be composed of persons representing community organizations and charitable institutions, public officials, and other people as determined by the Office;
- Establish with state and local governments and private business and industry relationships that promote and assure equal opportunity for Somali and East African people in government, education, and employment.

## Organization

The Office's chief administrator is the Director, appointed by the Commission. The Director serves at the pleasure of the Commission. With the approval of the Commission, the Director may appoint employees as necessary; the employees serve at the pleasure of the Director.<sup>4</sup>

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## HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-30-19

H0269-I-133/ts

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<sup>4</sup> R.C. 121.342.