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S.B. 46
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Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Sens. Yuko and Rulli

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SUMMARY

- Creates the Commission on Eastern European Affairs and specifies the membership, appointment terms, compensation, and duties of the Commission.
- Creates the Office of Eastern European Affairs and specifies the membership and duties of the Office.
- Defines “Eastern European people” to be persons who use an Eastern European language as the person’s primary language or identify as being from one of the Eastern European countries listed in the bill.
- Makes an appropriation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Commission on Eastern European Affairs

Membership

The bill creates the Commission on Eastern European Affairs. The Commission is made up of the following members:

- Three members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to serve a term ending one year after the appointment;
- Four members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to serve a term ending two years after the appointment;
- Four members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to serve a term ending three years after the appointment;
- Two nonvoting members who are members of the House of Representatives and appointed by the Speaker of the House, with one member being from the majority party and one member being from the minority party;

- Two nonvoting members who are members of the Senate and appointed by the Senate President, with one member being from the majority party and one member being from the minority party.

For the appointment of nonvoting members who are members of the House, the Speaker must recommend two members and the Minority Leader must recommend one member to the Governor. For the appointment of nonvoting members who are members of the Senate, the Senate President must recommend two members and the Minority Leader must recommend one member to the Governor.

Membership qualifications

The bill requires that all voting members appointed must be of Eastern European origin, a U.S. citizen or lawful, permanent, resident, representative of various geographical regions of Eastern European people (see “**Definition of Eastern European people**,” below), and proportionally representative of the Eastern European composition of Ohio.¹

Appointment terms

Under the bill, after the initial appointments, each term of appointment for voting members is three years. Members must serve from the date of the member’s appointment until the end of the three-year term for which the members were appointed.

Voting members must remain in office after the member’s term has expired until a successor is appointed or 30 days have passed since the end of a member’s term and no successor has been appointed, whichever occurs earlier.

Nonvoting members appointed must remain in office until the ending date of the member’s term as a General Assembly member.

Vacancies for all members will be filled in the same manner as appointment. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy must serve the remainder of the original term for which the vacancy was filled.²

Meetings

The bill requires the Commission to meet not less than six times during a calendar year. At the first meeting of the Commission, the members must elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and other officers from its voting members. The Commission must prescribe rules to govern the Commission. Six voting members constitute a quorum and no action can be taken without the affirmative vote of six members.³

¹ R.C. 107.22(A).

² R.C. 107.22(B).

³ R.C. 107.22(C) and (D).

Compensation

The bill specifies that voting members will be compensated for actual and necessary expenses incurred and for each day that a member is engaged in Commission duties, not to exceed one day per month.⁴

Duties

The bill specifies the following duties of the Commission:⁵

- Gather and disseminate information and conduct hearings, conferences, investigations, and special studies on issues and programs concerning Eastern European people;
- Secure appropriate recognition of accomplishments and contributions of Eastern European people to Ohio;
- Promote public awareness of the issues of Eastern European people by conducting a program of public education;
- Develop, coordinate, and assist other public and private organizations that serve Eastern European people, including conducting training programs for community leadership and service project staff;
- Advise the Governor, General Assembly, and state departments and agencies regarding the nature, magnitude, and priorities of the issues of Eastern European people;
- Advise the Governor, General Assembly, and state departments and agencies on the special needs of Eastern European people regarding education, employment, energy, health, housing, welfare, and recreation and develop and implement policies and programs to address those needs;
- Propose new programs concerning Eastern European people to public and private agencies and evaluate any existing programs within agencies;
- Review and approve grants from federal, state, or private funds that are administered or subcontracted by the Office of Eastern European Affairs;
- Review and approve the annual report prepared by the Office of Eastern European Affairs;
- Coordinate and provide information regarding available state services to meet the needs of Eastern European people; and
- Appoint a Director to the Office of Eastern European Affairs.

⁴ R.C. 107.22(E).

⁵ R.C. 107.23(A).

Office of Eastern European Affairs

The bill also creates the Office of Eastern European Affairs. The Office serves the Commission on Eastern European Affairs, and the Director of the Office, whom is appointed by the Commission, serves at the pleasure of the Commission. The Director, with approval of the Commission, can appoint employees as are necessary to carry out the duties of the Office. The employees serve at the pleasure of the Director.

The Office must do all of the following:⁶

- Provide information and advise the Commission on proposed solutions to problems of Eastern European people;
- Serve as a clearinghouse to review and comment on all proposals to meet the needs of Eastern European people that are submitted to the Office by public and private agencies;
- Apply for and accept grants and gifts from government and private sources to be administered by the Office or subcontracted to local agencies, as long as the local agencies use the grants and gifts for the public purpose intended;
- Monitor and evaluate all programs subcontracted to local agencies by the Commission and ensure that any grants and gifts from the government are being used for the public purpose intended;
- Endeavor to ensure that Eastern European people have access to decision-making bodies in all state and local government departments and agencies;
- Submit a written annual report of the Office's activities, accomplishments, and recommendations to the Commission;
- Establish an advisory committee for special subjects, as needed, to facilitate and maximize community participation in the operation of the Commission. An advisory committee must be made up of persons representing community organizations, charitable institutions, public officials, and other persons as determined by the Office; and
- Establish relationships with local governments, state governments, and private businesses that promote and ensure equal opportunity for Eastern European people in government, education, and employment.

Definition of "Eastern European people"

The bill defines "Eastern European people" as persons who possess either of the following characteristics:

- Use an Eastern European language as the person's primary language; or

⁶ R.C. 107.24.

- Identify as, or regarded in the community as being, of Albanian, Belarusian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Bulgarian, Carpatho-Rusyn, Croatian, Czech, East European Jewish, Estonian, Greek, Hungarian, Kashubian, Kosovar, Latvian, Lithuanian, Lusatian Sorbian, Macedonian, Moldovans, Montenegrins, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovenian, Transylvanian Saxon, Ukranian, or any other Eastern European origin.⁷

Appropriation

The bill appropriates \$440,944 for both FY 2022 and 2023 to the Commission on Eastern European Affairs to operate the Commission.⁸

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-03-21

S0046-I-134/ec

⁷ R.C. 107.23(B).

⁸ Sections 2 and 3 of the bill.