



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER THIRTY-TWO

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION TO EXAMINE RACIAL INEQUITY IN VIRGINIA LAW

Importance of the Initiative

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a long and complex history, which includes a history of racial inequities and racially-discriminatory laws. The purpose of this Commission is to review the *Virginia Acts of Assembly*, *Code of Virginia*, and administrative regulations with the goal of identifying and making recommendations to address laws that were intended to or could have the effect of promoting or enabling racial discrimination or inequity. Such laws have no place in Virginia or its law books.

In the case of the *Acts of Assembly*, discriminatory laws have been enacted, and in some cases obviated by court rulings. Nonetheless, the words still remain in the *Acts* as all-but-hidden reminders of the initial malicious intent and the painful history that spawned the laws.

This Commission will work to identify the vestiges of inequity and inequality in Virginia's laws, laying the groundwork for the redefining of the Commonwealth in the 21st century as a state committed to the success and equitable treatment of every citizen.

Establishment of the Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and §§ 2.2-134 and 2.2-135 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law (Commission). The Commission will identify laws in Virginia that have the effect or could have the effect of enabling or promoting racial inequity or inequality.

Composition and Support of the Commission

The Commission's members and chair(s) will be appointed by the Governor. The Governor will select experts, scholars, and community leaders with knowledge of and/or experience in civil rights, race and equity, and the law. The Governor may appoint other members at any time to carry out the assigned functions of the Commission. The Commission will have an advisory role and the members will serve without compensation, in accordance with § 2.2- 2100 of the *Code of Virginia*. In carrying out its duties, the Commission may appoint working groups as it deems appropriate, and may solicit participation from relevant subject matter experts, practitioners and historical analysts.

Staff support for the Commission will be provided by the Office of the Governor and any other agencies or offices as may be designated by the Governor. An estimated 250 hours of staff time will be required to support the work of the Commission.

Duties of the Commission

The Commission will meet upon the call of the chair(s) and will issue an interim report with its findings and recommendations no later than November 15, 2019, and any additional reports and recommendations as necessary or as requested by the Governor. This report may also include a proposed framework for the continuation of the Commission's work. The Commission's findings and recommendations will be distributed to promote best practices across the Commonwealth.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective upon signing and shall remain in full force and effect for a year from its signing, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this fourth day of June, 2019.



Handwritten signature of Ralph S. Northam in black ink.

Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:

Handwritten signature of Kelly Thomasson in black ink.

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth