

An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions (H.3157 /S.2077)

Representative Patricia A. Haddad and Senator Jason Lewis
Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Why is a lack of diversity in public leadership a problem?

- Public boards and commissions have outsized impact on the direction of our policies and initiatives on education, health and human services, housing and economic development, labor and workforce development, public safety, and more.
- Without various viewpoints and voices to inform public leadership, we risk putting in place less effective policies.
- We need more diverse representation in leadership and governance that broadly reflects the commonwealth of Massachusetts and offers a variety of perspectives on the decisions that impact our community and our future.

What will this legislation do?

The composition of appointed public boards and commissions will broadly reflect the general public of Massachusetts. Composition will not exceed 50% of one gender. Racial and ethnic composition of each board and commission will, at minimum, reflect the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in the general population. There will be a focused effort to appoint women of color to boards and commissions. Current board members' terms will not be affected.

The Facts*

- Women are underrepresented among our key education boards -- an urgent concern given the fact that women are 75% of K-12 teachers, 94% of childcare workers, and 57% of all higher education students.
- In Massachusetts, people of color account for 28% of the population but only 7% of CEOs and 10% of chairs on public boards. Women of color comprise just 2% of CEOs and 6% of board chairs.
- Since 2019 there has been some increase in the number of white women and men of color in board leadership positions, but zero gains for women of color. **

(9/13/21)

*[“The Women’s Power Gap in MA Public Boards & Commissions.”](#) The Eos Foundation, March 2019.

** [“MA Public Boards and Commissions 2021.”](#) The Eos Foundation, March 2021.

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