
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 1555

AN ACT CONCERNING THE TEN-YEAR PLAN TO ERADICATE CONCENTRATED POVERTY IN PARTICIPATING CONCENTRATED POVERTY CENSUS TRACTS.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the agencies and entities involved in developing a 10-year plan to reduce the levels of concentrated poverty in a designated “concentrated poverty census tract” participating in a Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) pilot program (see BACKGROUND).

Under current law, DECD’s Office of Neighborhood Investment and Community Engagement must develop this plan in consultation with DECD’s Office of Community Economic Development Assistance, the Office of Policy and Management, Office of Workforce Strategy, Office of Early Childhood, State Department of Education, applicable community development corporations serving the participating tract or tracts, applicable municipal chief elected officials, and any other public or private entity the DECD commissioner finds relevant or necessary to achieve these purposes. The bill additionally requires the office to consult with DECD, the Department of Housing, and the regional workforce development board that serves the participating area.

The bill also requires the DECD commissioner, by September 1, 2025, to submit an additional progress report to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee on the 10-year plan’s development. By law, he must also report his progress to the committee by June 1, 2025, and submit the finished plan to the General Assembly by January 1, 2026.

Lastly, the bill eliminates provisions establishing a seven-member working group of legislators to develop a guidance document by April 1, 2025, that sets a framework for (1) best practices and any initiatives or actions it believes will mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty and

(2) specific metrics to include in the 10-year plan. The working group never met.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Concentrated Poverty Census Tract Pilot Program

In 2024, the legislature created a pilot program aimed at reducing concentrated poverty in the state. Under this program, a new office within DECD must develop a 10-year plan for a participating “concentrated poverty census tract” (i.e. a tract in which at least 30% of households have incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL)) together with specified state agencies, local officials, and a community development corporation established by community members to help implement it.

Starting on the date DECD submits the 10-year plan to the legislature, state agencies must give priority to the projects included in the plan for any grants or funding programs they award or administer for which the projects may be eligible. These projects also have priority for specified state funding (e.g., Community Investment Fund 2030 funding) subject to each program’s existing criteria.

10-Year Plan

By law, DECD’s Office of Neighborhood Investment and Community Engagement must develop a 10-year plan for the participating tract or tracts to reduce the levels of concentrated poverty in the area served by the CDC by:

1. reducing the percentage of households living in the tract or tracts with incomes below the FPL to 20% or less and
2. making sustained improvements in community infrastructure and other underlying conditions that prolong concentrated poverty and economic inertia in the tract or tracts.

The plan must at least include:

1. measurable implementation steps, target dates for completing each step, and the state or local official or agency responsible for doing so;
2. minimum statewide averages for educational metrics (e.g., kindergarten-, college-, and career- readiness and grade level reading and mathematics) to serve as benchmarks for improvements in the tract or tracts; and
3. a list of possible projects, as specified under the law.

The office must begin overseeing the plan's implementation by January 1, 2026.

Right of Action Against State or Municipal Officials

Starting July 1, 2027, if any state or municipal official does not timely fulfill his or her requirements or responsibilities under the pilot program or 10-year plan, a certified community development corporation created for a concentrated poverty census tract may bring a mandamus action against the official under certain conditions. Specifically, the corporation must (1) have been selected under DECD's pilot program process, (2) demonstrate good-faith efforts to effectuate the 10-year plan, and (3) be aggrieved by the official's failure.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 52 Nay 0 (04/24/2025)