

By: Morales Shaw

H.B. No. 4520

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to equitable representation in decision making for transportation planning.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Sections 201.051(b) and (i), Transportation Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) The members shall be appointed to reflect the diverse geographic regions and population groups of this state. One member must reside in a rural area and be a registered voter of a county with a population of less than 150,000. One member must have experience as a frequent transit user, bicycle or pedestrian commuter, or as a person with a disability that has affected their use of the transportation system.

(i) Appointments to the commission shall ~~[be made without regard to race, color, disability, sex, religion, age, or national origin of the appointees and shall]~~ reflect the diversity of the population of the state as a whole.

SECTION 2. Subchapter H, Chapter 201, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 201.6016 to read as follows:

Sec. 201.6016. EQUITABLE DECISION MAKING POLICY. The department shall develop and implement a policy for equitable decision making in the transportation planning process. The policy must:

(1) analyze race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and

1 geographic representation in positions and on boards, commissions,
2 and committees responsible for transportation planning-related
3 decisions, including:

4 (A) metropolitan planning organization
5 committees;

6 (B) department executive leadership;

7 (C) the commission; and

8 (D) governing bodies of:

9 (i) regional mobility authorities, county
10 toll road authorities, and regional tollway authorities;

11 (ii) transit authorities; and

12 (iii) port authorities;

13 (2) analyze public participation in the department's
14 planning processes to ensure people of all races, ethnicities,
15 genders, abilities, socio-economic status, languages, and
16 geographic locations are successfully participating in those
17 processes; and

18 (3) establish guidelines for the entities under
19 Subdivision (1) to achieve equitable representation, including at
20 least the following:

21 (A) proposing new joint powers agreements and
22 bylaws to remedy problems;

23 (B) guidance on improving public processes;

24 (C) guidance for adopting proportional voting
25 systems based upon residential populations of member governments to
26 provide equal representation for all residents in decisions of
27 entities such as metropolitan planning organizations; and

1 (D) guidance for entities to include people with
2 disabilities at all levels of decision making.

3 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.