

House Bill No. 599

An act relating to the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council; creating s. 14.31, F.S.; providing legislative findings and intent; creating the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council within the Executive Office of the Governor for certain purposes; providing for council membership; providing for terms of members; providing for successor appointments; providing for meetings and organization of the council; specifying serving without compensation; providing for per diem and travel expenses; specifying required activities of the council; specifying restricted activities; requiring a report to the Governor and Legislature; providing for future repeal and abolition of the council; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 14.31, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

14.31 Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:

(a) Compassionate groups of individuals have selflessly aided this state in serving our most vulnerable residents and our most debilitated neighborhoods.

(b) Inspired by faith and civic commitment, these organizations have accomplished much in changing the lives of thousands and resurrecting neighborhoods torn by the strife of crime and poverty.

(c) It is essential that this state cooperate with these organizations in order to provide an opportunity to participate on an equal basis, regardless of each organization's orientation, whether faith-based or secular.

(2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to recognize the contributions of these organizations and to encourage opportunities for faith-based and community-based organizations to work cooperatively with government entities in order to deliver services more effectively. The Legislature further intends that the purpose of the council is to advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies, priorities, and objectives for the state's comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

(3) ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL.—

(a) The Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council, an advisory council as defined in s. 20.03, is established and assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor. The council shall be administratively housed within the Executive Office of the Governor.

(b) The council shall consist of 25 members. Council members may include, but need not be limited to, representatives from various faiths, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, corporations, and municipalities.

(c) The council shall be composed of the following members:

1. Seventeen members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor.

2. Four members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the President of the Senate.

3. Four members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(d) Council members shall serve 4-year terms, except that the initial terms shall be staggered as follows:

1. The Governor shall appoint six members for a term of 3 years, six members for a term of 2 years, and five members for a term of 1 year.

2. The President of the Senate shall appoint two members for a term of 3 years and two members for a term of 2 years.

3. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members for a term of 3 years and two members for a term of 2 years.

(e) A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the original appointing authority for the unexpired portion of the term.

(4) MEETINGS; ORGANIZATION.—

(a) The first meeting of the council shall be held no later than August 1, 2006. Thereafter, the council shall meet at least once per quarter per calendar year. Meetings may be held via teleconference or other electronic means.

(b) The council shall annually elect from its membership one member to serve as chair of the council and one member to serve as vice chair.

(c) Thirteen members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

(d) Members of the council shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061.

(5) SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES.—The council shall review and recommend in a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

(a) How faith-based and community-based organizations can best compete with other organizations for the delivery of state services, regardless of an organization's orientation, whether faith-based or secular.

(b) How best to develop and coordinate activities of faith-based and community-based programs and initiatives, enhance such efforts in communi-

ties, and seek such resources, legislation, and regulatory relief as may be necessary to accomplish these objectives.

(c) How best to ensure that state policy decisions take into account the capacity of faith-based and other community-based initiatives to assist in the achievement of state priorities.

(d) How best to identify and promote best practices across state government relating to the delivery of services by faith-based and other community-based organizations.

(e) How best to coordinate public awareness of faith-based and community nonprofit initiatives, such as demonstration pilot programs or projects, public-private partnerships, volunteerism, and special projects.

(f) How best to encourage private charitable giving to support faith-based and community-based initiatives.

(g) How best to bring concerns, ideas, and policy options to the Governor and Legislature for assisting, strengthening, and replicating successful faith-based and other community-based programs.

(h) How best to develop and implement strategic initiatives to strengthen the institutions of families and communities in this state.

(i) How best to showcase and herald innovative grassroots nonprofit organizations and civic initiatives.

(j) How best to eliminate unnecessary legislative, regulatory, and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based and other community-based efforts to address social problems.

(k) How best to monitor implementation of state policy affecting faith-based and other community-based organizations.

(l) How best to ensure that the efforts of faith-based and other community-based organizations meet objective criteria for performance and accountability.

(6) RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES.—The council may not make any recommendation that conflicts with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or the public funding provision of s. 3, Art. I of the State Constitution.

(7) REPORT.—By February 1 of each year, the council shall prepare a written report for the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives containing an accounting of its activities and recommended policies, priorities, and objectives for the state's comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community-based organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

(8) EXPIRATION.—This section is repealed and the council is abolished June 30, 2011, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.

Approved by the Governor May 4, 2006.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 4, 2006.