



MAURA HEALEY
ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
ONE ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

(617) 727-2200
(617) 727-4765 TTY
www.mass.gov/ago

September 30, 2021

The Honorable Marc R. Pacheco, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Antonio F.D. Cabral, House Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 466
Boston, MA 02133

RE: S.2077/H.3157, *An Act to ensure gender parity and racial and ethnic diversity on public boards and commissions*

Dear Chairman Pacheco, Chairman Cabral, and Members of the Joint Committee:

I write to express my support for *An Act to ensure gender parity and racial and ethnic diversity on public boards and commissions*. Women and people of color, and *particularly* women of color, have been historically excluded and are currently underrepresented in our statewide public boards and commissions. This legislation would be an important step forward in ensuring that the state's boards and commissions reflect the communities they serve.

In the Attorney General's Office, we have made a concerted effort to appoint individuals from diverse backgrounds to statewide boards and commissions. I know many of my fellow appointing authorities share this commitment. But we must do more to ensure that our boards and commissions reflect the diversity of our state. Without diverse viewpoints and voices at the table, we risk putting in place less effective policies that further marginalize underrepresented communities.

In a [2021 report](#), the EOS Foundation's Women's Power Gap Initiative compared recent data on the demographic makeup of our statewide boards and commission with data from 2019. The Initiative reported the following key findings:

Although women and people of color in the state make up 51.5% and close to 30%, respectively, of the population of Massachusetts, they are underrepresented among our 50 most prominent statewide boards. While the Initiative noted an increase in white women serving as public board chairs, no similar progress had been made for people of color in the intervening years. Specifically, since 2019, the percentage of white women serving as chairs increased from

34 to 44%. For men of color, that percentage stayed the same at 4%, and for women of color, that percentage stayed the same at 6%.

This legislation would require that each appointed statewide public board and commission reflect the state's demographic makeup with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity. It will require appointing authorities working collaboratively to ensure this kind of diverse composition in making our appointments. Under the terms of the bill, no board should exceed 50% of one gender, and the racial and ethnic composition of each board should reflect, at least, the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in Massachusetts. I urge the Committee to report this legislation favorably.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Anne Johnson Landry, Assistant Attorney General and Senior Policy Advisor, at (617) 963-2027.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maura Healey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Maura Healey