SENATE DOCKET, NO. 2184 FILED ON: 2/19/2021

SENATE . . . . . No. 1261

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Harriette L. Chandler

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act creating a special commission on racism and mental health.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Harriette L. Chandler	*First Worcester*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 1261

By Ms. Chandler, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1261) of Harriette L. Chandler for legislation to create a special commission on racism and mental health. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

An Act creating a special commission on racism and mental health.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. There shall be a special commission, as established by section 2A of chapter 4 of the General Laws, to conduct an investigation and make recommendations to reduce or eliminate the effects of racism on mental health.

The special commission shall consist of: two members of the house of representatives, both of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one of whom shall serve as co-chair; two members of the senate, both of whom shall be appointed by the president of the senate, one of whom shall serve as co-chair; the chair of the Massachusetts black and latino legislative caucus or designee; the secretary of health and human services or designee; the commissioner of public health or designee; the commissioner of the Department of Insurance or designee; and the executive director of Health Care for All or designee. The first meeting of the commission shall take place not later than February 28, 2022.

The co-chairs of the special commission shall appoint six additional members, including but not limited to: a member of an organization focused on improving mental health outcomes; a member of an organization committed to racial justice; a member of an organization committed to reducing health inequities in communities of color; a member of the Massachusetts Psychological Association; a member of a mental health care service provider with expertise in health care disparities; and an academic researcher with expertise in racism and mental health.

The special commission shall investigate and study measures to reduce or eliminate racial inequities in mental health; and make recommendations regarding improved access to treatment, competency building within the profession to address disparities, existing research gaps, collection and reporting of data regarding mental health outcomes in communities of color, partnerships with community organizations, and ensuring that communities of color have equitable access to a full range of mental and behavioral health care services. The commission shall consider the impact that racism has on the mental health of people of color, including but not limited to an inquiry into its impact on trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The special commission shall submit its findings and recommendations to the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives, the chair of the house committee on ways and means, the chair of the senate committee on ways and means, the chairs of the joint committee on public health and the chairs of the joint committee on mental health, substance abuse and recovery not later than July 31, 2023.