

Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security

Bill Summary

Bill Number: H2636

Name: An Act creating an independent correctional oversight office to facilitate the recommendations of the special legislative commission on structural racism in correctional facilities of the Commonwealth.

Sponsor(s): Representative Russell Holmes & Erika Uyterhoeven

Hearing Date: 15th October, 2025 at 1PM in A2

Prior History: Study

Summary:

Section 1: The Special Legislative Commission on Structural Racism in Correctional Facilities finds that structural racism exists within Massachusetts corrections, disproportionately affecting BIPOC individuals, correctional staff, and other marginalized groups. This racism manifests through institutional policies, systemic interactions, interpersonal bias, and internalized prejudices, leading to disparities in healthcare, education, job opportunities, and overall treatment. To address this, the Commission recommends legislation mandating robust data collection, independent oversight, and racial demographic tracking to monitor and dismantle systemic racism in the Massachusetts correctional system.

Section 2: proposes to amend The General Laws by inserting after section 15 of chapter 12A: Office of Inspector General: Independent Correctional Oversight of Matters Relating to Structural Racism.

This legislation establishes independent oversight of structural racism in Massachusetts correctional facilities, ensuring transparency, accountability, and anti-racism compliance. The Anti-Racism Corrections Inspector General and Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity Unit (IDAREU) will investigate systemic racial disparities, enforce corrective measures, and protect against retaliation while maintaining public reporting and oversight.