

AN ACT TO PROMOTE GENDER AND RACIAL DIVERSITY ON PUBLIC BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

BUILDING BETTER BOARDS

Public boards and commissions have substantial impact on policies and initiatives on education, health and human services, housing and economic development, labor and workforce development, public safety, and more.

We need more diverse representation in membership, leadership, and governance that broadly reflects the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and offers a variety of perspectives on the decisions that shape our community and our future.

AN UPDATED BILL FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

The previous bills would have required that the composition of each appointed public board and commission broadly reflect the general public of the Commonwealth, racially, ethnically, and by gender.

The 2023-2024 bill has the same goal—to ensure parity on public boards and commissions—but asks for transparency, data collection, and reporting of public board and commission membership in order to disclose the inequities of representation. This approach is based on the Nasdaq diversity rule approved by the Securities & Exchange Commission.

WHAT IS PARITY ON BOARD?

BILL HD.633 / BILL SD.1060

(malegislature.gov)

SPONSORED BY

Rep. Tram Nguyen, Rep. Dawne Shand,
& Sen. Liz Miranda

Parity on Board is an initiative led by YW Boston, alongside a statewide coalition, working towards member diversity and equity on public boards and commissions.

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THIS BILL DOES:

- *Require boards and commissions to identify & report data on their members, including identifying demographics to the Office of the Governor.*
- *Require an annual published report of board composition data.*
- *Require appointing authorities that do not meet diversity goals to explain why & describe efforts being taken to increase diverse members.*

THIS BILL DOES NOT:

- *Require current board members to be displaced or removed from their positions.*
- *Disclose individual applicant or nominee information other than broad identifying demographic information.*

LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS REPRESENTATION

Since 2019 there has been some increase in the number of white women and men of color in board leadership positions but zero gains for women of color. Severe gender disparities persist on many boards, with 32% of boards having 30% or fewer women, [according to the 2019 – 2022 Women's Power Gap Report](#).

An Act to Promote Gender and Racial Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions (HD633/SD1060) provides that appointing authorities for public boards and commissions shall strive to appoint at least 50% female and at least 30% of an underrepresented minority or LGBTQ+ identifying people as members.

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