



Senate Fiscal Agency
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

House Bill 5600 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Carrie A. Rheingans
House Committee: Government Operations
Senate Committee: Appropriations

CONTENT

The bill would create the Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison within the Legislative Council. The liaison would help establish and maintain a government-to-government relationship between the 12 Federally recognized tribes in Michigan and the Legislature.

Creation of the Office

The Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison would be created within the Legislative Council. The principal executive officer for the Office would serve as the tribal legislative liaison at the pleasure of the Council. The liaison would be appointed from a list of at least three names provided by the United Tribes of Michigan or a successor agency.

The Council would establish the budget for the Office and would have to approve expenditures and the employment of staff for the Office. In addition to the liaison, the Office would have to include at least two tribal legislative policy advisors who would provide legislative analysis and policy work on behalf of the liaison.

Liaison Powers and Duties

The liaison would have to do the following:

- Maintain relationships with each of the 12 Federally recognized tribes in Michigan and visit each tribe at least once per year.
- Provide guidance for legislators and their staff during development of legislation based on how it could affect tribes and tribal members.
- Inform the Legislature of the impact of specific legislation on the 12 tribes in Michigan.
- Provide an annual, hour-long training to legislators and their staff on how to consult and coordinate with the liaison and the history and current state of the 12 Federally recognized tribes in Michigan.

Also, the liaison could communicate with any tribal liaison in the executive branch.

Lastly, the Office would have to submit a report by December 31 to the Governor, the Senate Majority Leader, the Speaker of the House, and the chairperson of each committee in the legislature. The report would have to summarize concerns presented by the elected tribal leaders during development of legislation in the previous year. The report also would have to be posted on a publicly accessible website.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would result in a cost of approximately \$500,000 annually. Based on the estimated average cost of a State employee for salary and benefits for fiscal year (FY) 2024-25 of \$138,900, the total estimated cost for the liaison and the two tribal policy advisors would be \$416,700. The remaining funds would be used to cover other office expenses. Costs could be greater in future years depending on actual operating and staff costs once the office was established and operational.

The FY 2024-25 budget for the Legislature (which includes the Legislative Council) appropriated \$500,000 General Fund/General Purpose for the Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison in Public Act 121 of 2024. This funding amount should be sufficient in the initial year to establish the Office and to hire the liaison and the two tribal policy advisors.

The Legislative Council already houses two other similar offices. In FY 2024-25, the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman is funded at \$1,585,800 while the Michigan Veterans Facility Ombudsman is funded at \$368,600.

Date Completed: 11-14-24

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco, Jr.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.