

1       Sec. 1. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; RACIAL EQUITY AND  
2                   BIAS; PLAN AND REPORT

3           (a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

4                   (1) the State’s Department of Corrections is a department within the  
5           Agency of Human Services with the stated purpose in 28 V.S.A. § 1 of  
6           developing and administering a rehabilitative correctional program designed,  
7           in part, to “render treatment to offenders with the goal of achieving their  
8           successful return and participation as citizens of the State and community” and  
9           to “foster their human dignity.”

10                   (2) The Department of Corrections does not serve in a law enforcement  
11           capacity but does play an important role in implementing the quality of an  
12           individual’s sentence and ability for a successful return to and participation in  
13           the community.

14                   (3) The Department’s role is to also provide security and ensure racial  
15           and social equity to employees and to individuals under the custody of the  
16           Commissioner.

17           (b) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly:

18                   (1) to address systemic racism, bias, and diversity and inclusion to  
19           achieve equity for employees of the Department of Corrections and offenders  
20           under the custody of the Commissioner;

21                   (2) to recruit, train, and retain a diverse and high-quality workforce in  
22           the Department; and

1           (3) to enhance a human services approach to the State correctional  
2           program that will require the Department of Corrections to undertake a  
3           thorough review and revision of its policies, administrative directives, and  
4           interim procedures and memos.

5           (c) Plan. The Commissioner of Corrections shall develop a strategy and  
6           long-term plan to address systemic racism, bias, and diversity and inclusion in  
7           the Department of Corrections.

8           (1) Scope. The scope of the plan shall include the Department’s  
9           employment practices and supervision of persons under the custody of the  
10          Commissioner both in State facilities and in the field.

11          (2) Evaluation. The plan shall include a timeline and process for  
12          evaluating the following:

13           (A) Department hiring practices, training, supervision, professional  
14           development, and competency standards to inform the basis of performance  
15           evaluation and promotion of employees;

16           (B) identification of the resources and funding needed to complete  
17           the plan, including upgraded technology, consultant support, and required data;  
18           and

19           (C) a list of stakeholders and a process for how the Department will  
20           engage with the Department’s employees, the individuals under the custody of  
21           the Commissioner, and the broader community.

22          (d) Report. On or before January 15, 2021, the Commissioner of  
23          Corrections shall submit a report on the strategy and long-term plan described

DOC/RACIAL EQUITY PROPOSAL  
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- 1 in subsection (c) of this section, and the timeline for the implementation of the
- 2 plan, to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate
- 3 Committee on Judiciary.

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