

Legislative Analysis



OFFICE OF THE TRIBAL LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 5600 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Carrie A. Rheingans
Committee: Government Operations
Complete to 9-24-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5600 would create the Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison in the Legislative Council¹ to consult with the legislature when bills that affect the federally recognized tribes in Michigan are being developed.²

Office personnel and procedures

The principal executive officer of the office would be the tribal legislative liaison, an individual appointed by the Legislative Council from a list of at least three names provided by the United Tribes of Michigan (UTM) or a successor organization.³ The liaison would serve until removed by the Legislative Council.

The Legislative Council would have to establish procedures for approving the office's budget, for spending money in the budget, and for employing the office's staff, which in addition to the liaison would have to include at least two tribal legislative policy advisors to handle legislative and policy work.

Liaison powers and duties

The liaison would have to do all of the following:

- Maintain a relationship with each federally recognized tribe in Michigan and visit each tribe at least once a year.
- Provide guidance to legislative members and staff on how proposed legislation may impact tribes and tribal members.
- Inform the legislature of the effect that specific legislation will have on the tribes in Michigan.
- Provide to legislative members and staff an annual training of at least one hour on the history and current state of the federally recognized tribes in Michigan and how to consult and coordinate with the liaison.

The liaison could communicate with any tribal liaison in the executive branch.

¹ The Legislative Council consists six representatives and six senators appointed respectively by the speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader. Each group of six must include at least two members from the chamber's minority party. <https://council.legislature.mi.gov/Council/Index>

² There are 12 federally recognized tribes in Michigan: Bay Mills Indian Community, Hannahville Indian Community, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish or Gun Lake Tribe, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and the Nottawaseppi Band of Huron Potawatomi.

For a map, see: https://www.michiganbusiness.org/4a8101/globalassets/documents/tribes_map.pdf

³ The UTM is an organization whose membership is open to all federally recognized tribes in Michigan and that provides a forum for addressing shared issues and interests.

Report

By December 31 each year, the office would have to provide the governor, the Senate majority leader, the speaker of the House, and each legislative committee chair with a written report that includes a summary of concerns presented by elected tribal leaders during the development of legislation in the previous year.⁴ The office would also have to post the report on a publicly accessible website.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would result in annual ongoing costs of approximately \$500,000 to the Legislative Council of the state legislature to establish the Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison. Costs could potentially be greater depending on actual office operations and personnel needs once the office is established. The bill would require a minimum of three staff members, including the tribal legislative liaison and two tribal legislative policy advisors.

The legislature appropriated \$500,000 GF/GP for the Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison for fiscal year 2024-25 under the annual appropriations act, 2024 PA 121. This funding amount would likely be sufficient to support the staffing requirement under the bill along with necessary office equipment and supplies.

As a point of comparison, offices similar to the one proposed in the bill that are housed within the Legislative Council are the Michigan Veterans' Facility Ombudsman and the Legislative Corrections Ombudsman, which receive annual appropriations of approximately \$369,000 and \$1.6 million, respectively. The Legislative Corrections Ombudsman currently employs 11 employees, including the ombudsman position.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

⁴ For example, the report due by December 31, 2028, would have to address issues that came up in the year that ended December 31, 2027.