

HOUSE BILL 1545

By Staples

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38 and Title 39, relative to the homicide rate of African American victims.

WHEREAS, the Violence Policy Center is a national nonprofit organization that conducts research, offers public education, and provides the public and policymakers with analysis and information on the issue of violence in America; and

WHEREAS, in May 2019, the Violence Policy Center analyzed the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) data for the year 2016, the most recent data available, and ranked Tennessee in the top 10 of states with the highest homicide rates among African American victims; and

WHEREAS, the Violence Policy Center determined from the SHR data that the overall national homicide rate for 2016 was 5.10 homicides per 100,000 persons, but the national homicide rate among African American victims was more than four times higher, at the rate of 20.44 per 100,000; and

WHEREAS, the Violence Policy Center also determined from the SHR data that the homicide rate among African American victims in Tennessee was 28.41 per 100,000, which is more than five times the overall national homicide rate and nearly eight points higher than the national homicide rate among African American victims; and

WHEREAS, the high homicide rate among African American victims in Tennessee represents a public health crisis in this State; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The Tennessee advisory commission on intergovernmental relations shall conduct a study on the homicide rate among African American victims in Tennessee and report

to the general assembly no later than January 31, 2021. The study must include a recent historical comparison of the homicide rate among African American victims in Tennessee, and possible factors affecting changes in that rate over time; explanatory factors for Tennessee's high rate of homicide among African American victims; a comparison of the homicide rate among African American victims in Tennessee with the homicide rate among other persons in this state, including the homicide rates among other minority groups; a comparison of the homicide rates in Tennessee with those of neighboring states; a review of state and local initiatives to combat high homicide rates among African American victims in neighboring states; and any other information or analysis the advisory commission may deem relevant to the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to determine the causes of the high homicide rate among African American victims in this state, whether legislative action is necessary or appropriate to address those causes, and ways in which the state and local governments can work together to reduce the rate. If a need for legislation is found, then the report must also include recommendations on possible legislative remedies.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.