

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1149 Session of
2022

INTRODUCED BY L. WILLIAMS, CAPPELLETTI, KEARNEY, MUTH, FONTANA,
SANTARSIERO, SAVAL, KANE AND STREET, APRIL 1, 2022

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, APRIL 1, 2022

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of October 27, 1955 (P.L.744, No.222), entitled
2 "An act prohibiting certain practices of discrimination
3 because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age or
4 national origin by employers, employment agencies, labor
5 organizations and others as herein defined; creating the
6 Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission in the Governor's
7 Office; defining its functions, powers and duties; providing
8 for procedure and enforcement; providing for formulation of
9 an educational program to prevent prejudice; providing for
10 judicial review and enforcement and imposing penalties,"
11 providing for duties of commission relating to name changes
12 by certain individuals.

13 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
14 hereby enacts as follows:

15 Section 1. The act of October 27, 1955 (P.L.744, No.222),
16 known as the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, is amended by
17 adding a section to read:

18 Section 7.1. Duties of Commission Relating To Name Changes
19 By Certain Individuals.--(a) Not later than sixty days after
20 the effective date of this section, the commission shall
21 establish a single online access point on the commission's
22 publicly accessible Internet website to aid individuals in
23 identifying, securing and understanding the necessary petitions

1 and procedures associated with satisfying the legal requirements
2 necessary to lawfully assume a change of name in this
3 Commonwealth.

4 (b) The commission's online access point established under
5 subsection (a) shall provide electronic access to features or
6 resources regarding the following:

7 (1) How to draft and file a petition for a change of name in
8 the court of common pleas as required under 54 Pa.C.S. § 701
9 (relating to court approval required for change of name).

10 (2) A list and explanation of the legal requirements and
11 consequences for a change of name as specified in 54 Pa.C.S. Ch.
12 7 (relating to judicial change of name), including:

13 (i) An outline of the procedure from the point of filing a
14 name change petition to the point at which a determination is
15 made by the court.

16 (ii) A notification of the court's publications requirements
17 relating to the individual's name change petition.

18 (iii) A notification that the court is required to share
19 one's application for a name change and fingerprints with the
20 Pennsylvania State Police, and how the Pennsylvania State Police
21 handles that information.

22 (iv) Exceptions to the typical procedure for a name change
23 petition.

24 (3) The points of contact for, and electronic links to,
25 informational resources, including informational packets
26 relating to name changes, where available, of each court of
27 common pleas to assist an individual seeking a name change in
28 directly contacting the court of common pleas in the county of
29 the individual's residence.

30 (4) At least one point of contact who:

1 (i) has specialized expertise assisting individuals who
2 confront biases or inequities rooted in gender or sex
3 stereotypes when navigating the courts or legal name change
4 procedure; and

5 (ii) is available to provide guidance to individuals
6 regarding the particular challenges individuals may encounter in
7 navigating the name change procedure and, if available, connect
8 individuals with resources in their counties of residence. For
9 purposes of satisfying this requirement, the commission shall
10 seek cooperation from other organizations with specialized
11 expertise in assisting individuals who confront biases or
12 inequities rooted in gender or sex stereotypes, including the
13 Interbranch Commission on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness for
14 recommendations on an appropriate point of contact and providing
15 culturally responsive assistance.

16 (5) Other features or resources that the commission deems
17 advisable to aid individuals in navigating the process of a
18 change of name.

19 (c) At the request of the commission, an agency shall
20 cooperate in good faith with, and provide technical assistance
21 and guidance for, the development and implementation of
22 additional features or resources of the commission's online
23 access point established under subsection (a).

24 (d) The commission shall develop and make available training
25 seminars and informational resources for judges, attorneys and
26 court personnel on the particular challenges that individuals
27 who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or
28 questioning, asexual and other sexual minorities encounter in
29 navigating the courts and the legal name change process in order
30 to enable the judges, attorneys and court personnel to become

1 knowledgeable, competent and affirming throughout the legal name
2 change process. For purposes of satisfying this requirement, the
3 commission may work with other organizations with specialized
4 expertise in assisting individuals who confront bias or
5 inequities rooted in gender or sex stereotypes when navigating
6 the legal name change procedure, including the Interbranch
7 Commission on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness.

8 (e) Definition.--As used in this section, the term "agency"
9 includes an office, department, authority, board or commission
10 of the executive branch of the Commonwealth that is subject to
11 the policy, supervision and control of the Governor.

12 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.