

H.3115 – An Act to Ensure Equitable Representation in the Commonwealth

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Does this bill only pertain to data collected from members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community?

Answer: No, this bill will collect data from all major racial groups and does not single out the AAPI community.

Question: How can I be assured that my privacy will be protected under this legislation?

Answer: This bill states that personal information (i.e., data like name, address, social security number, etc.) is confidential and protected by state and federal privacy laws.

Question: Will I be required to report racial/ethnic data to the state against my will under this legislation?

Answer: No, this bill states that you are not required to participate in this data collection, and you can still receive state services even if you choose not to report. Additionally, the bill does not allow government agencies to fill out your racial or ethnic information unless you agree.

Question: What would the collected data be used for?

Answer: The data will be used to improve government and community services for individuals in the Commonwealth. Collecting this data on race/ethnicity can help the state to improve public services, outreach, and programs so that they are better focused on the needs of various communities across Massachusetts.

Question: What safeguards are in place to ensure that this data is used for said purposes?

Answer: This bill requires the Executive Office of Administration and Finance to work to ensure that no personal information is publicly released. There is also a required public hearing that lets the public have input into changes to rules and regulations.

Question: What do I do if I identify as multiracial or multiethnic?

Answer: Any individual is welcome to select more than one ethnic subgroup, write in their own subgroup, or choose the aggregate category.

Question: Why does this data need to be collected if it is already included in Census data?

Answer: This bill will tie data to state agencies so the state can better understand the needs of the various communities across the Commonwealth. In addition, the Census is only conducted once every ten years.