

# Legislative Analysis



## COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

Phone: (517) 373-8080  
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

### House Bill 5936 as introduced

**Sponsor: Rep. Alabas A. Farhat**

**Committee: Government Operations**

**Complete to 12-11-24**

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

### SUMMARY:

House Bill 5936 would create the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs Act to put into statutory law provisions regarding the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs,<sup>1</sup> created and housed in the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) by executive order.<sup>2</sup> The provisions of the bill reflect current commission activities.

#### Commission members and procedures

Under the bill, the commission would consist of 15 individuals who have a particular interest or expertise in Middle Eastern American concerns in Michigan, appointed by the governor by and with the consent of the Senate. (*Middle Eastern Americans* would be defined as Michigan residents who have ancestral ties to countries in the Middle East.) The term of a member appointed after the bill takes effect would be three years (current terms are four years). If a vacancy occurs, the governor would appoint someone to serve the balance of the term. The governor could remove a member of the commission for incompetence, dereliction of duty, malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office, or any other good cause.

By 90 days after the bill takes effect, the commission would have to adopt bylaws for its operation. The commission would have to annually elect a member as chairperson and could also annually elect a vice-chairperson and other officers it considers necessary or appropriate. The commission would have to meet at least quarterly at places and times it determines. With three business days' notice, it could also meet more frequently at the call of the chairperson or at the request of a majority of its members. A majority of members would be a quorum for transacting commission business, and a vote in favor by the majority of members serving would be required for any commission action. A member could not vote by proxy. The commission would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

A member of the commission would have to refer any legal, legislative, and media contacts to LEO.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/commissions/cmeaa>

<sup>2</sup> [Executive Order 2015-6](#) created the Middle-Eastern American Affairs Commission in the Department of Civil Rights and contains provisions concerning its operations. [Executive Reorganization Order 2016-3](#) renamed the commission the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs and transferred it to the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. [Executive Reorganization Order 2019-3](#) transferred the commission to LEO, where it is now housed. Further back, the Advisory Council on Arab and Chaldean American Affairs was created by [Executive Order 2004-33](#) in the Department of Civil Rights. It was abolished, and its powers and duties were transferred to the Michigan Council on Arab and Chaldean American Affairs, by [Executive Order 2013-9](#). This council was in turn abolished, and its powers and duties were transferred to the Middle-Eastern American Affairs Commission, by Executive Order 2015-6, above.

### Commission powers and duties

The commission would have to do all of the following:

- Act in an advisory capacity to the governor and the LEO director on policy matters affecting Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan .
- Advise LEO and make recommendations on all of the following:
  - Changes in state programs, statutes, and policies concerning the coordination and administration of state programs serving Middle Eastern American communities.
  - The nature, magnitude, and priorities of the problems of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan and the state's policies concerning or impacting those communities.
  - Improving and protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Middle Eastern American communities across all levels of state and local government.
  - Attracting potential future residents from Middle Eastern American communities by ensuring that Michigan is a safe place where members of Middle Eastern American communities and their families can thrive.
- Review, develop, and recommend policies, administrative actions, legislative changes, or other approaches to eradicate and prevent discrimination and to address other forms of inequality.
- Promote methods to ensure equal access to state services for Middle Eastern American communities.
- Work to ensure equal access to all levels of education for Middle Eastern American communities.
- Serve as a reporting agency for incidents of anti-Middle Eastern American harassment in Michigan.
- Publicize and disseminate information on relevant issues, available programs and resources, funding opportunities, and other information that is relevant to advancing the interests of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan by addressing the communities' unique problems and needs.
- Promote Middle Eastern American culture, history, and economic contributions in Michigan through coordinated efforts and advocacy across state government.
- Promote public awareness of experiences of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan.
- Secure appropriate recognition for accomplishments and contributions of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan.
- Develop a unified policy and plan of action to serve the needs of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan.
- Stimulate and encourage the study and review of the status of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan.
- Advocate for and initiate programs for the betterment of Middle Eastern American communities in Michigan.
- Cooperate with and coordinate activities with all of the following commissions and councils:
  - The Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission.<sup>3</sup>
  - The Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/commissions/mapaac>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/commissions/hlcom>

- The Black Leadership Advisory Council.<sup>5</sup>
- The Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission.<sup>6</sup>
- The Michigan Immigrant and Refugee Council.<sup>7</sup>
- The Michigan Women’s Commission.<sup>8</sup>
- Provide other information or advice as requested by the governor or the LEO director.

The commission could, as necessary, establish advisory workgroups composed of individuals or entities that participate in the commission’s activities to assist it in performing its duties. It could adopt, reject, or modify any advisory workgroup recommendations.

The commission would have to exercise its powers and duties independently of LEO, except for budget, procurement, and management functions, which would have to be performed under the direction and supervision of the LEO director.

#### Department powers and duties

LEO would have to do all of the following:

- Provide administrative services to the commission.
- Make the times and places of commission meetings available to the public.
- Keep the minutes of the commission’s meetings.
- Maintain a record of the commission’s actions.

Subject to appropriation, LEO could provide staff and office space to enable the commission to carry out its powers and duties.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

House Bill 5936 would not have a fiscal impact on any units of state or local government, since the bill would codify activities that are already undertaken by the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs housed within LEO. The FY 2024-25 budget appropriates \$214,000 GF/GP and 1.0 FTE for the commission, and LEO does not anticipate that any additional resources would be required because of this bill.

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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.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/leo/boards-comms-councils/black-leadership-council>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/commissions/lgbtq-commission>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/ogm/commissions/michigan-immigrant-and-refugee-council>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/mwc>