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CONTACT

Daniel Delagrangé
Office of State Senator Lori Berman
Delagrangé.Daniel@flsenate.gov
(561) 292-6014

Earl Jones
Office of State Representative Tracie Davis
Earl.Jones@myfloridahouse.gov
(904) 673-4192

Senator Berman and Representative Davis File Legislation to Advance Racial Equity

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – State **Senator Lori Berman (D-Boynton Beach)** and State **Representative Tracie Davis (D-Jacksonville)** recently filed [SB 388](#) and [HB 221](#) to make Florida a national exemplar in reconciling with inequities and historical injustices by creating the executive Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The legislation directs the Office, headed by the Chief Diversity Officer, to coordinate with agencies and create a strategic plan that establishes equity across state government, requires a review of agency policies and programs to assess whether underserved communities have unequal access to benefits and opportunities, calls for increased state investment in underserved communities within the Governor's recommended budget, and requires implicit bias training in Florida's agencies.

Senator Lori Berman released the following statement:

"This bill is a recognition and reflection that America's history is one of racism and discrimination. We cannot progress as a multiracial democracy unless we confront that past and understand racism within the power structures of today. Our bill will advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across the services, systems, and operations of our state government. It will set Florida – one of the most diverse states in the nation – on a path of inclusive excellence so every Floridian can reach their full potential."

Representative Tracie Davis released the following statement:

"Unfortunately, Florida lags in recognizing that without a strategic plan focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion used in our government agencies, we neglect to address the disparities that exist within recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining practices. The academic community consistently tells us that producing a diverse workforce is the priority; our goal with this legislation is to build a bridge towards greater inclusiveness

and equal opportunity. However, it is imperative to provide equal access to underserved communities by eliminating systematic barriers which remains at the forefront of our agenda."

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