

# Racial Equity & the 87th Session

children at Risk

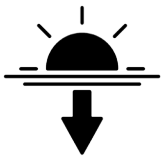


## Senate Bill 399 (E. Lucio)

### *Racial Equity & the Sunset Advisory Commission*



Across Texas state government, multiple agencies work to ensure all Texans have equal access to every opportunity. However, because of historic racism, not all Texans are afforded the same opportunities. State agencies must work to address these inequities. By adding assessment of a state agency's efforts to reduce racial disparities, the bill will ensure that state agencies will receive support, instruction, and guidance in efforts to reduce racial disparities.



The Sunset Review is a legislative oversight tool that is used to hold state agencies accountable. Created in 1977 by the Texas Legislature, the Sunset Review seeks to ensure that state agencies are performing at a high standard via an impartial, nonpartisan public forum held to evaluate the need for a state agency and its effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness to the public. The Sunset Review process has a proven track record of improving state laws that have led to major policy changes in nearly every area of state government.



#### **POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

*Require the Sunset Advisory Commission to assess the agency's efforts to reduce racial disparities when under review. This requirement would not create new or more government but will instead utilize an existing and long-established process to evaluate how all branches of Texas state government are addressing racial disparities.*



The two state agencies that oversee the largest public services, education and healthcare, are the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC). Of the over 1 million Texas children who had classes canceled because of COVID-19 this past school year, 65% of them were Black and Hispanic. In regards to healthcare, Black and Hispanic Texans made up 71% of the state's uninsured population in 2018. By ensuring that state agencies like TEA and HHSC are working to address racial disparities in their work, Texas can move one step closer to becoming a state where everyone benefits from an equitable playing field.