

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

BILL 6-22: RECREATION — MONTGOMERY COUNTY SPORTS COMMISSION — ESTABLISHED

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates that Bill 6-22 could narrow racial and social inequities in sports participation across the County. As such, OLO anticipates a favorable impact of Bill 6-22 on RESJ.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

The purpose of racial equity and social justice (RESJ) impact statements is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. Racial equity and social justice refer to a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, power, and leadership of communities of color and low-income communities with a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities.¹ Achieving racial equity and social justice usually requires seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social harms that have caused racial and social inequities.²

PURPOSE OF BILL 6-22

The purpose of Bill 6-22 is to increase participation and diversity in sports across the County by forming a Montgomery County Sports Commission.³ The 23-member Commission would have two primary functions: to serve as an organizational body that would conduct and advocate for enhanced sports opportunities that include addressing disparities in youth sports participation; and with the County Executive and County Council recognize local teams and athletes who win state or local national championships or compete internationally.⁴ The Commission would be staffed by the Department of Recreation and would be required to submit a report to the Executive and the Council on sports participation in the County annually.⁵ Bill 6-22 was introduced to the Council on March 15, 2022.⁶

RACIAL AND GENDER INEQUITIES IN SPORTS

Physical activity and participation in sports confers several benefits to children and youth. Studies have shown the health benefits of physical activity and playing sports among youth to include:

- Lowered risk of developing cancer;⁷
- Reduced risk of experiencing anxiety and depression;⁸
- Increased physical activity into adulthood; and⁹
- Improved self-esteem and social outcomes, including a reduced likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors.¹⁰

Research also demonstrates a positive association between sport participation and academic outcomes that include:

- Higher standardized test scores and grade point averages;¹¹
- Higher educational aspirations and college attendance; and¹²
- Higher levels of educational attainment.¹³

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Yet sizable disparities in sports participation by race, ethnicity, gender, and income exist. For example, according to 2014 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results for Montgomery County, among middle schoolers:¹⁴

- Black, Latinx, and other race students were twice as likely as White peers to have not played on a sports team over the past 12 months (38.0 – 42.9 percent vs. 20.9 percent);
- Black, Latinx, and other race boys were two to three times as likely as White peers to have not played on a sports team over the past 12 months (26.5 – 42.2 percent vs. 16.2 percent); and
- Black, Latinx, and other race girls were nearly twice as likely as White peers to have not played on a sports team over the past 12 months (44.0 – 50.3 percent vs. 25.6 percent).

2014 YRBS results regarding physical activity trends among high schoolers evidenced similar disparities where:¹⁵

- Black, Latinx, and other race students were nearly twice as likely as White and multiple race peers to have not been physically active for at least 60 minutes over the past week (20.6 – 21.6 percent vs. 11.2 – 12.4 percent);
- Black, Latinx, and other race boys were nearly twice as likely as White peers to have not been physically active for at least 60 minutes over the past week (16.2 to 17.3 percent vs. 8.7 percent); and
- Black, Latinx, and other race girls were nearly twice as likely as White and multiple race peers to have not been physically active for at least 60 minutes over the past week (24.7 – 26.6 percent vs. 13.6 percent).

Finally, 2014 YRBS results on participation in any extracurricular activities, including sports, among high schoolers evidenced disparities by race, ethnicity, and gender like disparities in physical activity where:¹⁶

- Black and Latinx students were less likely than White, other race, and multiple race peers to participate in at least one extracurricular activity (54.3 – 69.3 percent vs. 76.5 – 81.0 percent);
- Black and Latinx male students were less likely than White and other race peers to participate in at least one extracurricular activity (52.6 – 70.5 percent vs. 73.1 – 79.6 percent); and
- Black and Latinx female students were less likely than White, other race, and multiple race peers to participate in at least one extracurricular activity (55.8 – 68.3 percent vs. 80.1 – 87.3 percent).

The reasons for these disparities are multi-faceted, rooted in legacies of discrimination and income inequality. Drivers of disparities in sports participation noted in OLO's recent Gender Equity in Local Sports Programs Report, include:¹⁷

- Gender norms, stereotypes, and gender-based discrimination;
- Race-based discrimination;
- Lack of public and institutional support;
- Lack of female role models;
- Time constraints;
- Incidents of sexual harassment and assaults; and
- Walkability of neighborhoods and accessibility of sporting opportunities.

The high cost of participating in organized sports was also cited in both the OLO Gender Equity Report and the 2020 Youth Sports in Montgomery County Report as a driver of racial and social inequities in local sports participation.¹⁸ Of note, the increasing cost of participating in sports offered by private organizations coupled with policies that privileged these organizations in reserving public use facilities were raised as common concerns among stakeholders seeking to increase participation of under-represented groups in County youth sports.¹⁹

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ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

OLO anticipates a favorable impact of Bill 6-22 on racial equity and social justice as a stated goal of the Montgomery County Sports Commission is to diminish inequities in sports participation by gender, race, ethnicity, and income.

With a commitment to advocating for increased access to sports opportunities for under-deserved populations in the County, OLO anticipates the Commission will encourage the Executive and Council to make investments that disproportionately serve residents and families with the greatest economic needs. Such investments should in turn disproportionately benefit Black and Latinx children and communities of color in the County. Given the gender gap in sport participation that especially impacts Black and Latinx girls, OLO anticipates the Commission will recommend County investments that both target girls overall and especially target girls of color with expanded opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities that are accessible in neighborhoods and communities where they reside.

Should the Commission's recommendations result in increased sports opportunities for Black, Latinx and other race youth, and girls in particular, Bill 6-22 can ultimately advance RESJ in sports participation in the County.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires OLO to consider whether recommended amendments to bills aimed at narrowing racial and social inequities are warranted in developing RESJ impact statements.²⁰ OLO finds that Bill 6-22 is likely to advance racial equity and social justice. As such, this RESJ statement does not offer recommendations.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging, analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ impact statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from "Applying a Racial Equity Lens into Federal Nutrition Programs" by M. Gamblin, et.al. Bread for the World, and from Racial Equity Tools <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

² Ibid

³ Legislative Request Report, Bill 6-22

⁴ Montgomery County Council, Bill 6-22, Recreation – Montgomery County Sports Commission – Established, Introduced March 15, 2022

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Moore S.C., et. Al, Leisure-time physical activity and risk of 26 cancer types in 1.44 million adults. JAMA Internal Medicine, May 16, 2016 cited by Natalia Carrizosa, Gender Equity in Local Sports Programs, OLO Report 2022-3, February 8, 2022

⁸ Zhu, X., Haegele, J., Healy, S., "Movement and mental health: Behavioral correlates of anxiety and depression among children of 6-17 years old in the U.S." Mental Health and Physical Activity, 16 (2019) cited by N. Carrizosa, 2022

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⁹ Perkins, D.F., Jacobs, J.E., Barber, B.L., Eccles, J.S., “Childhood and Adolescent Sports Participation as Predictors of Participation in Sports and Physical Fitness Activities During Young Adulthood,” Youth and Society 35, No. 4 (2004) cited by N. Carrizosa, 2022

¹⁰ Marsh, H.W., “The Effects of Participation in Sport During the Last Two Years of High School.” Sociology of Sport Journal 10 (1993); Marsh, H.W. and Kleitman, “School Athletic Participation: Mostly Gain with Little Pain.” Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 25 (2003)

¹¹ Hanks, M.P. and Eckland, B.K. “Athletics and Social Participation in the Educational Attainment Process.” Sociology of Education 49 (4) (1976); Otto, L.B., and Alwin, D.F., “Athletics, Aspirations, and Attainments.” Sociology of Education, 50 (2) (1977)

¹² Marsh, H.W. and Kleitman

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Maryland Middle School Survey, Montgomery County, Data Tables – Weighted Data, 2014

¹⁵ Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, Maryland High School Survey, Montgomery County, Data Tables – Weighted Data, 2014

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ N. Carrizosa, 2022

¹⁸ N. Carrizosa, 2022; N. Carrizosa, Youth Sports in Montgomery County, OLO Report 2020-4, March 10, 2020

¹⁹ N. Carrizosa, 2020

²⁰ Montgomery County Council, Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights - Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee - Established