

Sen. Harris Announces Legislation to Establish COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force with a UIO Representative

Category: Policy Blog

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On April 30, 2020 Senator Kamala Harris announced she will introduce new legislation to combat racial and ethnic disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act would create a task force designed to provide Congress and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with weekly recommendations on COVID-19 resource allocations according to racially disaggregated data, provide oversight and recommendations for federal agencies on COVID-19 relief funds, and report on structural inequalities before and in response to COVID-19. The task force, following the COVID-19 public health crisis, would then become an Infectious Disease Racial Disparities Task Force.

The task force legislation is in response to many accounts of major racial disparities during this pandemic, including the health disparities American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) are facing. To this end, the task force is set to include one representative on behalf of Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) and Urban Indians. On May 8, 2020 Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL) introduced companion legislation in the House, H.R. 6763.

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