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Culver signs bill addressing racial disparity in sentencing

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DES MOINES, Iowa - Governor Culver has signed into law a bill that will require lawmakers to look at the impact proposed sentencing laws will have on racial and ethnic groups.

The new law comes as Iowa tries to shake the reputation of having the greatest prison racial disparity in the nation.

Culver says the Minority Impact Statement Bill is the first of its kind in the nation. He says it's another step toward the goal of equal justice under the law for every Iowan.

The bill also applies to proposed crime, parole and probation issues.

In addition, it would require that those who apply for a state grant must fill out a minority impact statement.

Under the legislation, minorities include women, disabled people, blacks, Latinos, Asians or Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaskan Native Americans.

State Representative Wayne Ford, who authored the bill, says it will create a better balance for all Iowans.

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