

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2163

To establish the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, to study and make recommendations to address social problems affecting Black men and boys, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 18, 2019

Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. BOOKER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To establish the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, to study and make recommendations to address social problems affecting Black men and boys, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Commission on the
5 Social Status of Black Men and Boys Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. COMMISSION ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Commission on the So-
8 cial Status of Black Men and Boys (hereinafter in this

1 Act referred to as “the Commission”) is established within
2 the United States Commission on Civil Rights Office of
3 the Staff Director.

4 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall consist of
5 19 members appointed as follows:

6 (1) The Senate majority leader shall appoint
7 one member who is not employed by the Federal
8 Government and is an expert on issues affecting
9 Black men and boys in America.

10 (2) The Senate minority leader shall appoint
11 one member who is not employed by the Federal
12 Government and is an expert on issues affecting
13 Black men and boys in America.

14 (3) The House of Representatives majority
15 leader shall appoint one member who is not em-
16 ployed by the Federal Government and is an expert
17 on issues affecting Black men and boys in America.

18 (4) The House of Representatives minority
19 leader shall appoint one member who is not em-
20 ployed by the Federal Government and is an expert
21 on issues affecting Black men and boys in America.

22 (5) The Chair of the Congressional Black Cau-
23 cus shall be a member of the Commission, as well
24 as 5 additional Members of the Congressional Black
25 Caucus who shall be individuals that either sit on

1 the following committees of relevant jurisdiction or
2 are experts on issues affecting Black men and boys
3 in the United States, including—

4 (A) education;

5 (B) justice and Civil Rights;

6 (C) healthcare;

7 (D) labor and employment; and

8 (E) housing.

9 (6) The Staff Director of the United States
10 Commission on Civil Rights shall appoint one mem-
11 ber from within the staff of the United States Com-
12 mission on Civil Rights who is an expert in issues
13 relating to Black men and boys.

14 (7) The Chair of the United States Equal Em-
15 ployment Opportunity Commission shall appoint one
16 member from within the staff of the United States
17 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission who is
18 an expert in equal employment issues impacting
19 Black men.

20 (8) The Secretary of Education shall appoint
21 one member from within the Department of Edu-
22 cation who is an expert in urban education.

23 (9) The Attorney General shall appoint one
24 member from within the Department of Justice who

1 is an expert in racial disparities within the criminal
2 justice system.

3 (10) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
4 ices shall appoint one member from within the De-
5 partment of Health and Human Services who is an
6 expert in health issues facing Black men.

7 (11) The Secretary of Housing and Urban De-
8 velopment shall appoint one member from within the
9 Department of Housing and Urban Development
10 who is an expert in housing and development in
11 urban communities.

12 (12) The Secretary of Labor shall appoint one
13 member from within the Department of Labor who
14 is an expert in labor issues impacting Black men.

15 (13) The President of the United States shall
16 appoint 2 members who are not employed by the
17 Federal Government and are experts on issues af-
18 fecting Black men and boys in America.

19 **SEC. 3. OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO APPOINTMENT; RE-**
20 **MOVAL.**

21 (a) **TIMING OF INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.**—Each ini-
22 tial appointment to the Commission shall be made no later
23 than 90 days after the Commission is established. If any
24 appointing authorities fail to appoint a member to the

1 Commission, their appointment shall be made by the Staff
2 Director of the Commission on Civil Rights.

3 (b) TERMS.—Except as otherwise provided in this
4 section, the term of a member of the Commission shall
5 be 4 years. For the purpose of providing staggered terms,
6 the first term of those members initially appointed under
7 paragraphs (1) through (5) of section 2 shall be appointed
8 to 2-year terms with all other terms lasting 4 years. Mem-
9 bers are eligible for consecutive reappointment.

10 (c) REMOVAL.—A member of the Commission may
11 be removed from the Commission at any time by the ap-
12 pointing authority should the member fail to meet Com-
13 mission responsibilities. Once the seat becomes vacant, the
14 appointing authority is responsible for filling the vacancy
15 in the Commission before the next meeting.

16 (d) VACANCIES.—The appointing authority of a
17 member of the Commission shall either reappoint that
18 member at the end of that member's term or appoint an-
19 other person meeting the qualifications for that appoint-
20 ment. In the event of a vacancy arising during a term,
21 the appointing authority shall, before the next meeting of
22 the Commission, appoint a replacement to finish that
23 term.

1 **SEC. 4. LEADERSHIP ELECTION.**

2 At the first meeting of the Commission each year,
3 the members shall elect a Chair and a Secretary. A va-
4 cancy in the Chair or Secretary shall be filled by vote of
5 the remaining members. The Chair and Secretary are eli-
6 gible for consecutive reappointment.

7 **SEC. 5. COMMISSION DUTIES AND POWERS.**

8 (a) STUDY.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall con-
10 duct a systematic study of the conditions affecting
11 Black men and boys, including homicide rates, ar-
12 rest and incarceration rates, poverty, violence, fa-
13 therhood, mentorship, drug abuse, death rates, dis-
14 parate income and wealth levels, school performance
15 in all grade levels including postsecondary education
16 and college, and health issues.

17 (2) TRENDS.—The Commission shall document
18 trends regarding the topics described in paragraph
19 (1) and report on the community impacts of relevant
20 government programs within the scope of such top-
21 ics.

22 (b) PROPOSAL OF MEASURES.—The Commission
23 shall propose measures to alleviate and remedy the under-
24 lying causes of the conditions described in subsection (a),
25 which may include recommendations of changes to the
26 law, recommendations for how to implement related poli-

1 cies, and recommendations for how to create, develop, or
 2 improve upon government programs.

3 (c) SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS.—The Commis-
 4 sion shall accept suggestions or comments pertinent to the
 5 applicable issues from members of Congress, governmental
 6 agencies, public and private organizations, and private
 7 citizens.

8 (d) STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The
 9 Office of the Staff Director of the United States Commis-
 10 sion on Civil Rights shall provide staff and administrative
 11 support to the Commission. All entities of the United
 12 States Government shall provide information that is other-
 13 wise a public record at the request of the Commission.

14 **SEC. 6. COMMISSION MEETING REQUIREMENTS.**

15 (a) FIRST MEETING.—The first meeting of the Com-
 16 mission shall take place no later than 30 days after the
 17 initial members are all appointed. Meetings shall be fo-
 18 cused on significant issues impacting Black men and boys,
 19 for the purpose of initiating research ideas and delegating
 20 research tasks to Commission members to initiate the first
 21 annual report described in section 7.

22 (b) QUARTERLY MEETINGS.—The Commission shall
 23 meet quarterly. In addition to all quarterly meetings, the
 24 Commission shall meet at other times at the call of the

1 Chair or as determined by a majority of Commission mem-
2 bers.

3 (c) QUORUM; RULE FOR VOTING ON FINAL AC-
4 TIONS.—A majority of the members of the Commission
5 constitute a quorum, and an affirmative vote of a majority
6 of the members present is required for final action.

7 (d) EXPECTATIONS FOR ATTENDANCE BY MEM-
8 BERS.—Members are expected to attend all Commission
9 meetings. In the case of an absence, members are expected
10 to report to the Chair prior to the meeting and allowance
11 may be made for an absent member to participate re-
12 motely. Members will still be responsible for fulfilling prior
13 commitments, regardless of attendance status. If a mem-
14 ber is absent twice in a given year, he or she will be re-
15 viewed by the Chair and appointing authority and further
16 action will be considered, including removal and replace-
17 ment on the Commission.

18 (e) MINUTES.—Minutes shall be taken at each meet-
19 ing by the Secretary, or in that individual's absence, the
20 Chair shall select another Commission member to take
21 minutes during that absence. The Commission shall make
22 its minutes publicly available and accessible not later than
23 one week after each meeting.

1 **SEC. 7. ANNUAL REPORT GUIDELINES.**

2 The Commission shall make an annual report, begin-
3 ning the year of the first Commission meeting. The report
4 shall address the current conditions affecting Black men
5 and boys and make recommendations to address these
6 issues. The report shall be submitted to the President, the
7 Congress, members of the President's Cabinet, and the
8 chairs of the appropriate committees of jurisdiction. The
9 Commission shall make the report publicly available online
10 on a centralized Federal website.

11 **SEC. 8. COMMISSION COMPENSATION.**

12 Members of the Commission shall serve on the Com-
13 mission without compensation.

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