

Offered by City Councilor Julia Mejia



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

An Ordinance Creating a Commission on Black Men and Boys

- WHEREAS,** Boston is a city where a majority of the population is people of color, with roughly 22.7% of the population identifying as “Black or African American only;” *and*
- WHEREAS,** A majority of BPS students identify as people of color, with 30% of the student population identifying as “Black,” according to BPS data; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Black men and boys continue to face discrimination and the disproportionate impacts of violence: A disproportionate number of homicide victims in 2020 were Black men and a 2018 study published in the Washington Post found that Boston has the widest gap in arrest rates for white and Black victims of homicide; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Black boys are less likely to be proficient in reading, math, and science than their white peers, according to a study published by the National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families, largely due to an education system that was not designed to cater to their lived experiences; *and*
- WHEREAS,** President Obama launched My Brother's Keeper in February 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color; and in the same month, Boston followed suit with the original filing of this ordinance, sponsored by Councilor Tito Jackson of District 7; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The ordinance was passed unanimously by the Boston City Council on October 29, 2014 but was vetoed by Mayor Marty Walsh the following month; *and*
- WHEREAS,** We have a responsibility and an obligation to continue the work of uplifting the lived experiences of Black men and boys to ensure that we are designing all spaces from a framework of equity and justice; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Black men and boys of the City require an outlet for expressing their opinions and ideas and a place to rely on for information, advocacy, and action; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**
- ORDERED:** That the City of Boston Code, Chapter XV shall be amended by adding the following new section:

SECTION 15-11. Commission on Black Men and Boys

Section 15-11.1: *Established.* There shall be within the Mayor's office a division to be known as the Commission on Black Men and Boys (hereinafter the "Commission")

Section 15-11.2: *Organization*

- A. *Membership.* The membership shall consist of twenty-one (21) members, all of whom shall be appointed by the Mayor. One two-year term member shall be a youth member. One three-year member shall be a youth member.
- B. *Terms.* The members shall be appointed to serve for the following initial terms:
 - a. Seven (7) members shall serve for two-year terms;
 - b. Seven (7) members shall serve for three-year terms;
 - c. Seven (7) members shall serve for four-year terms;

Thereafter, as the term of a member expires, the member's successor shall be appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years from such expiration.

Any members absent for more than one-third of the Commission meetings within a twelve-month period may be removed from the Commission by the Mayor at the Mayor's discretion by filing a written statement of reasons for removal with the City Clerk, provided, however, that there were at least three meetings of the Commission during the twelve-month period.

Vacancies, other than by reason of expiration of terms, shall be filled for the balance of unexpired terms, appointed in the same manner and by the same body.

- C. *Chair.* The Mayor shall appoint a member as the chairperson of the Commission who may be their Advisor and shall have the powers of a department head with respect to the execution of contracts and matters of personnel management within said office.
- D. *Compensation.* The members shall serve without compensation.

Section 15-11.3: *Duties.* The Duties of the Commission shall include but not be limited to:

- A. Advising the Mayor on issues pertaining to Black men and boys;
- B. Assisting the Office of the Mayor in determining budget and policy priorities;
- C. Monitoring and advising city agencies and departments on issues pertaining to Black men and boys;
- D. Designing projects and programs that promote equity for Black men and boys which are not currently being implemented by existing city agencies;
- E. Performing outreach, communication, and liaison to Black men and boys related to community groups and organizations;
- F. Working with the Department of Intergovernmental Relations concerning state and federal legislation and programs that are of concern to Black men and boys;
- G. Working with city departments including but not limited to the Human Rights Commission, the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet, and Boston Public Schools to assure that Black men and boys are represented at all levels of city government;
- H. Coordinating dialogues and action on behalf of city government to issues of concern to Black men and boys and related organizations, including but not limited to: concerns related to national

origin, sexual orientation and gender identity, mental, physical, and sexual health, violence prevention, employment, and more;

- I. During the first year of its existence, the Commission shall hold monthly meetings and give updates to the City Council on a quarterly basis;
- J. Producing reports pertaining to the work of the Commission and the progress of the City and the community to advance the status of Black men and boys.

Section 15-11.4: The Commission may promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the stated objectives.

Section 15-11.5: Effective Date.

This ordinance shall be effective upon passage.

Filed in City Council: 6/16/2021