Ordinance No. 720-2025

By Council Members Starr and Hairston

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

To supplement the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio 1976 by enacting new Sections 164.01 to 164.04 and 173.19, relating to the creation of the Cleveland Commission on Black Males.

WHEREAS, Black men have been subject to systemic issues due to historic and current policy decisions; for example, discriminatory policies, such as redlining, have led to racially segregated neighborhoods, concentrated poverty, and inequitable access to quality public schools due to unconstitutional school funding formulas based on property values; and

WHEREAS, this, and many other systemic issues, have led to disparate impacts and unfavorable outcomes for the Black community, but Black men are disproportionately impacted when it comes to criminalization, incarceration, education, and community violence; and

WHEREAS, Black male bodies tend to be more criminalized than their peers, beginning from preschool; they are suspended from school at a disproportionate rate compared to their peers, which encourages the school-to-prison pipeline of Black males; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2023 report from US Commission on the Status of Black Men and Boys, in the 2020-21 school year, Black boys made up 9 percent of the total preschool enrollment but 23.1 percent of preschool-aged children who faced one or more out-of-school suspensions; in K-12 schools, Black boys represented roughly seven percent but made up 15% of total single out-of-school suspension; and

WHEREAS, Black men were incarcerated at a rate of 1,826 per 100,000 compared to the total men's incarceration rate of 666 per 100,000 according to a 2022 analysis of the Bureau of Justice Statistics data by the Prison Policy Initiative; and

WHEREAS, Black men are among the least educated in the country; according to the National Center for Education Statistics in 2019, 28% of Black men ages 25-29 had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 40% of their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, Black men in Cuyahoga County are the most impacted by violence; and according to the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, between 2019-2024, a majority of homicide victims and perpetrators were Black males between the ages of 18-39; and

WHEREAS, Black men need more trauma-informed support than is currently available in the City or County; according to the Cuyahoga County Community Health Needs Assessment, there are significant untreated trauma, depression, and other mental health concerns among African American adults and children, especially those who've been impacted by homicides, non-fatal shootings, and other violence; and there is a lack of coordinated trauma-informed care and community building to support those affected by violence; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant need for more mentorship opportunities, community support, and trauma-informed care for young Black men transitioning from high school to higher education, workforce, and adult life; and

WHEREAS, this Council creates the Commission on Black Males whose mission is to study and research the state of Black men and boys in the city of Cleveland to understand gaps in services and areas of need to ensure improved quality of life for Black men and boys; and to build a network of organizations that serve the Black male population, and create and uplift mentorship opportunities and programs for young Black males transitioning out of high school into adulthood; and

WHEREAS, this ordinance constitutes an emergency measure providing for the usual daily operation of a municipal department; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, are supplemented by enacting new Sections 164.01 to 164.04 and Section 173.19 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 164
CLEVELAND COMMISSION ON BLACK MALES

Section 164.01 Declaration of Public Policy and Purpose

The Cleveland Commission on Black Males (CCBM) recognizes the importance of studying the varied conditions affecting Black men and boys within the City of Cleveland. This Commission is dedicated to advocating for policies and programs designed to address the specific needs of this demographic. The CCBM will evaluate the circumstances of Cleveland's Black male population, develop strategies to mitigate significant adversities, and formulate recommendations aimed at enhancing educational, social, economic, employment and housing conditions, among others. The CCBM is committed to fostering positive outcomes in areas such as education, health and wellness, and social justice for this population.

The CCBM will serve in an advisory capacity to assist Cleveland City Council, the Mayor, the Community Relations Board, the Department of Public Health, and various City departments in addressing the many issues that impact Black men and boys in the City.

Section 164.02 Cleveland Commission on Black Males, Composition and Terms

(a) There is hereby established the Cleveland Commission on Black Males, consisting of the Mayor, or his or her designee, three (3) members of Council appointed by Council, or the Council's designees; one (1) city employee from the Community Relations Board, and one (1) city employee from the Department of Public Health, both appointed by the Mayor; and seven (7) persons, who shall include the following:

(1) a representative from the faith community;
(2) a representative from the business community;
(3) a representative who is a member of a trades union;
(4) a representative from a social service agency or who is employed as a social worker;
(5) a representative from a grass-roots organization located in the City;
(6) a Cleveland Metropolitan School District ("CMSD") student between eleven (11) and fourteen (14) years old who lives in Cleveland, and has permission from their parent or legal guardian, who shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year;
(7) a CMSD High School student who lives in Cleveland, and has permission from their parent or legal guardian, who shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year;

(8) a college student who attends one (1) of the four (4) year Cleveland based universities and lives in Cleveland; and
(9) a college student who attends Cuyahoga Community College and lives in Cleveland;

(b) The appointing authority for those described in division (a) above shall be as follows: The Mayor shall appoint the members described in subdivisions (1) and (2); Council shall appoint those described in subdivisions (3) through (5); the Mayor and the Council shall each appoint one student described in subdivisions (6) and (7) and one student described in subdivisions (8) and (9).

(c) Other than the Mayor, or his or her designee, the members of Council or Council's designee, city employees, and the CMSD students, the term of the members shall be three (3) years. However, the terms of the original appointments shall be as follows: the members under subdivisions (a)(1), (a)(3), and (a)(5) shall serve three (3) years, the members under subdivisions (a)(2), (a)(4) and (a)(8) shall serve two (2) years, and the member under subdivision (a)(9) shall serve one (1) year. In the event that a vacancy occurs during the term of any member, the Commission, with Mayoral and Council approval, shall appoint a successor to serve the unexpired portion of that term.

Section 163.03 Organization and Procedures

(a) The Commission members shall select a chairperson at the first meeting of the Commission. The chairperson shall appoint from the Commission's membership a vice chairperson and secretary.

(b) The Commission shall meet at least once a month at such time and place as it shall decide. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson at the chairperson's discretion. A simple majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive duly-called meetings shall be removed from the Commission unless said member files a written appeal with the Commission and a majority thereof votes to retain said member.

(c) The Commission shall adopt such rules and regulations governing its own conduct, including the roles and responsibilities of the chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary, as are not in conflict with the Charter or these Codified Ordinances.

(d) The Commission may establish one (1) or more advisory subcommittees to help achieve the goals set forth in this Chapter.

(e) The Commission shall keep minutes of its meetings, a copy of which shall be kept on file in the Mayor's Office. All findings, reports and recommendations of the Commission shall be in writing and shall designate thereon the names of the members concurring therein. A member who does not concur in any such finding, report or recommendation may note thereof the reasons for said member's failure to concur.

Section 163.04 Duties of Commission

The Commission shall:

(a) Advise the Mayor, City Council, and City departments on matters pertaining to the quality of life for Black men and boys;

(b) Conduct data research and public hearings, and issue reports, including quarterly reports to all members of City Council, on its activities and the status of Black men in

education, economic development, health and wellness, employment and housing conditions, social justice, and civil rights;

(c) Develop community education and training programs and workshops with necessary departments that equip stakeholders with effective tools to address existing disparities;

(d) Develop, maintain, and share information and referral services to respond to the needs of Black men and boys;

(e) Recommend policies, new programs, or legislation to ensure equal rights, equity, and opportunities for all men;

(f) Conduct outreach, awareness, and public engagement campaigns aimed at ensuring active community participation in the Commission's efforts;

(g) Establish partnerships with local organizations and institutions to optimize resources and increase the impact of the Commission's initiatives;

(h) Coordinate dialogues and actions in collaboration with other City agencies and City departments on issues of concern to all Black men and boys, including but not limited to: equity and racial justice, economic opportunity and workers empowerment, education and youth advancement, affordable housing and pathways to homeownership, public health and wellness, fatherhood and families, community safety and returning citizens, and financial empowerment;

(i) Solicit grants or contributions on behalf of the City to further the purposes of the Commission and enhance its programs; and

(j) Any other responsibility requested by the Mayor or City Council.

Section 173.19 Cleveland Commission on Black Males

Except for the Mayor, or his or her designee, the members of Council, or Council's designees, and the City employees, all of whom shall remain uncompensated, the salaries of the members of the Cleveland Commission on Black Males shall be eight thousand nine hundred sixty-three dollars ($8,963.00) per annum.

Section 2. That this ordinance is declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

JHO:jho
6-2-2025
FOR: Council Members Starr, Hairston

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READ FIRST TIME on JUNE 2, 2025 **REPORTS**
and referred to DIRECTORS of Finance, Law;
COMMITTEE on Finance Diversity Equity and Inclusion

CITY CLERK

READ SECOND TIME

CITY CLERK

READ THIRD TIME

PRESIDENT

CITY CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR

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Published in the City Record _____

REPORT
after second Reading

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE, DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

FILED WITH COMMITTEE _____