

HOUSE No. 4024

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, August 1, 2019.

The committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities to whom were referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 131) of Russell E. Holmes and others relative to establishing a permanent commission on the social status of men and boys of color, and the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 168) of Chynah Tyler and others for the establishment of a permanent commission (including members of the General Court) on the social status of Black men and boys, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4024) ought to pass.

For the committee,

KAY KHAN.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act establishing a permanent commission on the status of black men and boys.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 3 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is
2 hereby amended by inserting the following section:-

3 Section 72. (1) There is established a permanent commission on the status of black men
4 and boys consisting of 19 persons as follows: 5 persons appointed by the governor; 4 persons
5 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; 4 persons appointed by the president of
6 the senate; and 6 persons appointed by the Massachusetts black and latino legislative caucus or
7 its successor organization. Members of the commission shall be drawn from diverse religious,
8 age, sexual orientation, socio-economic and geographic backgrounds from throughout the
9 commonwealth and shall have had experience working toward the improvement of the status of
10 black men and boys in society. Members shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 268A as
11 they apply to special state employees. The commission shall be an independent agency of the
12 government of the commonwealth and shall not be subject to the control of any other department
13 or agency.

14 (2)(a) Members shall serve terms of three years and until their successors are appointed.

15 (b) Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled by the original
16 appointing authority for the balance of the unexpired term.

17 (c) Appointments shall be made in consultation with organizations with a proven
18 commitment working toward the improvement of the status of black men and boys. Nominations
19 shall be solicited between August 1 and September 16 of each year through an open application
20 process using a uniform application to be developed by the Office of Access and Opportunity.
21 Appointing authorities shall widely distribute applications throughout the state.

22 (d) The commission shall elect from among its members a chair, a vice chair, a treasurer
23 and any other officers it deems necessary.

24 (e) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but
25 shall be reimbursed for any usual and customary expenses incurred in the performance of their
26 duties.

27 (3) The commission shall conduct an ongoing study of all matters concerning black men
28 and boys, including but not limited to examining issues which disproportionately have a negative
29 impact on black men and boys in Massachusetts and work to improve economic, educational,
30 criminal justice, public safety, health and wellness, identity, housing and societal outcomes for
31 black men and boys in the Commonwealth. In furtherance of that responsibility, the commission
32 shall, subject to appropriation for staffing: (a) study, review and report on the status of black men
33 and boys in the commonwealth; (b) inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and
34 local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to black men and boys; (c)
35 serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues

36 affecting black men and boys; (d) serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining
37 to black men and boys; (e) identify and recommend qualified persons for appointive positions at
38 all levels of government, including boards and commissions, as the commission deems necessary
39 and appropriate; (f) assess programs and practices in any state agencies as they affect black men
40 and boys, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate; (g) advise executive and
41 legislative bodies on the effect on black men and boys of proposed legislation, as the commission
42 deems necessary and appropriate; and (h) promote and facilitate collaboration among relevant
43 organizations in the state, as the commission deems necessary and appropriate. The commission
44 shall annually, subject to appropriation for staffing, on or before June 2, report the results of its
45 findings and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the governor, the clerks
46 of the senate and house of representatives.

47 (4) The powers of the commission shall include but not be limited to the following: (a) to
48 use such voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and
49 organizations as may from time to time be offered and needed; (b) to recommend policies and
50 make recommendations to agencies and officers of the state and local subdivisions of
51 government to effectuate the purposes of subsection (3); (c) to acquire adequate staff to perform
52 its duties, subject to appropriation; (d) to establish and maintain offices as it may deem
53 necessary, subject to appropriation; (e) to enact bylaws for its own governance; and, (f) to hold
54 regular, public meetings and to hold fact-finding hearings and other public forums as it may
55 deem necessary.

56 (5)(a) The commission may request from all state agencies such information and
57 assistance as the commission may require.

58 (b) The commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants
59 or bequests or any federal funds, for any of the purposes of this section. Such funds shall be
60 deposited in a separate account with the state treasurer, be received by said treasurer on behalf of
61 the commonwealth, and be expended by the commission in accordance with law.