

COMMISSION ON THE SOCIAL STATUS
OF BLACK MEN & BOYS

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BUSINESS MEETING

+ + + + +

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021

+ + + + +

The Commission convened via Zoom
teleconference at 1:00 p.m. EST, Marvin Williams,
Program Manager, presiding.

PRESENT:

REP. JOYCE BEATTY, Commissioner

JACK BREWER, Commissioner

RICHARD CESAR, Commissioner

ASST. ATTY. GENERAL KRISTEN CLARKE,
Commissioner

THOMAS M. COLCLOUGH, Commissioner

DR. MARSHALL DILLARD, Commissioner

LARRY ELDER, Commissioner

GERALD FOSTEN, Commissioner

REP. STEVEN HORSFORD, Commissioner

CALVIN JOHNSON, Commissioner

DR. JOSEPH MARSHALL, Commissioner

REP. LUCY MCBATH, Commissioner

DR. LASHAWN MCIVER, Commissioner

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DR. O.J. OLEKA, Commissioner

CHRISTIAN RHODES, Commissioner

REV. AL SHARPTON, Commissioner

REP. FREDERICA S. WILSON, Commissioner

MARVIN WILLIAMS, Program Manager

MAURO MORALES, Staff Director, USCCR

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 1:11 p.m.

3 I. CALL TO ORDER-MARVIN WILLIAMS,

4 CSSBMB PROGRAM MANAGER

5 MR. MORALES: Good afternoon. Dear
6 Commissioners, I want to welcome all of you to the
7 first meeting of the Commission on the Social Status
8 of Black Men & Boys. My name is Mauro Morales, and
9 I am the staff director of the U.S. Commission on
10 Civil Rights.

11 When Congress created the new Commission,
12 they placed the administrative responsibility for
13 this new Commission within the U.S. Commission on
14 Civil Rights. While it is unusual to place a
15 Commission within another Commission, we have
16 endeavored to bring the new Commission into existence
17 and are pleased to hold today's first meeting. We
18 look forward to working with each one of you and with
19 the members of Congressional Black Caucus.

20 The staff for the Commission on the
21 Social Status of Black Men & Boys will hold several
22 meetings next year and may undertake field
23 investigations at educational institutions, prisons,
24 and housing sites. I wish all of you the best. And
25 I'll turn the rest of the meeting over to the Program

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1 Manager for the new Commission, Dr. Marvin Williams.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mauro. This
3 meeting will now come to order. This is the initial
4 public meeting of the Commission on the Social Status
5 of Black Men & Boys called CSSBMB. It is now 1:13
6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, November 9th, 2021.

7 Again, good afternoon. I extend a warm
8 welcome to the incoming Commissioners, Commission
9 staff, and our public audience today. I am Marvin
10 Williams, and I serve as the Program Manager of the
11 United States Commission on the Social Status of
12 Black Men & Boys. Today, I am honored to partake in
13 this historic moment and having this inaugural
14 meeting. And I'm excited to be part of this emphasis
15 to improve the lives of Black men and boys in our
16 country.

17 **a. REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS-**

18 **REP. FREDERICA WILSON,**

19 **SPONSOR CSSBMB ACT**

20 DR. WILLIAMS: At this time, I will ask
21 for Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson to speak about
22 the origin of the Commission on the social status of
23 Black men and boys. Congresswoman Wilson?

24 COMMISSIONER WILSON: Thank you so much.
25 I can't tell you how excited I am. When I was a

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1 school principal, my school was one-third African
2 American and one-third Anglo and one-third Hispanic.
3 And of all of those children, my little Black boys
4 stuck out like a sore thumb.

5 They were just out of control. So I
6 invited men into the school to work with them, to
7 mentor them. And they began to change. And then
8 Giles killed Jesse. Giles murdered Jesse.

9 And when Giles murdered Jesse, I quit my
10 principal job, lost 70,000 dollars in salary, and ran
11 for the Miami-Dade County School Board in order to
12 stop the violence with Black men and boys. And you
13 have to remember this was 30 years ago. This was
14 during the crack cocaine era.

15 I started a program after eight hours of
16 debate by the school board. I was the only member -
17 - Black member of the school board countywide. And
18 they were saying, what are you going to do? We don't
19 have any money for that. I said, I don't want you
20 to give me money. Just pass the concept.

21 So, I got all of these Black boys in all
22 of the schools and begin to expose them, put them on
23 neck ties, took them on field trips, took train rides
24 and cruises, museums, work with the police, did all
25 kinds of things. And they changed. And now we're

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1 in Fort Lauderdale and Jacksonville, Tampa, St.
2 Petersburg, Nashville, Tennessee, Detroit, Michigan.
3 And we have a waiting list.

4 And then when I was elected to the House
5 of Representatives in Tallahassee, I established a
6 Commission -- a council on the status of Black men
7 and boys. And that council still is operational in
8 the Office of the Attorney General. So when I came
9 to Congress, I said, boy, we've got to find a way to
10 make this impact that we're making in Florida, that
11 we're making in the few states outside of Florida
12 nationwide.

13 So, I addressed the CBC and I said, this
14 is what I plan to do. So, I began to write the
15 legislation in concert with the Congressional Black
16 Caucus. Every member of the Congressional Black
17 Caucus signed onto the bill every year that I proposed
18 the bill, and it was proposed year after year after
19 year. This bill just would not -- they would not
20 bring this bill to the floor.

21 After George Floyd was murdered, it came
22 to the floor of the Senate. It passed. It came to
23 the floor of the house. It passed, overwhelming
24 bipartisan support. It passed.

25 I couldn't believe it. And I am just so

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1 elated that all of you are here with me today because
2 this Commission, it wasn't easy getting here in these
3 30 years. But it's the most important piece of
4 legislation passed in Congress since the Voting
5 Rights Act.

6 While our country battles an
7 unprecedented pandemic and extreme racial unrest in
8 most cities, it is business as usual. And it is so
9 disheartening to witness Black men and Black boys
10 killing Black men and Black boys nonstop, even during
11 these perilous times. This new cycle does not even
12 -- the new cycle doesn't even mention their names and
13 local law enforcement does little to catch the
14 perpetrators.

15 How long will we allow this? How long
16 will we as talented Black members on this call let it
17 continue? How many funerals do we need to attend?
18 Babies, children, mothers, families are caught in the
19 crossfire. How long?

20 And the police murdering Black boys and
21 men. How long? When a Black boy is born, the doctor
22 says, Ms. Wilson, it's a boy. He doesn't say, Ms.
23 Wilson, it's a murderer.

24 So how do you raise a murderer? We're
25 going to count the ways and we're going to stop the

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1 madness right here in this Commission. No more. The
2 Commission will conduct a systemic study of the
3 conditions affecting Black men and boys including
4 homicide rates, arrests, incarceration rates,
5 poverty, violence, fatherhood, mentorship, drug
6 abuse, death rates, disparate income and wealth
7 levels, school performance in all grade levels,
8 including post-secondary education and college, and
9 health issues.

10 Every African American family -- every,
11 every African American family has experienced some
12 challenge with regard to Black men and boys. Whether
13 it's your father, son, nephew, cousin, grandson, or
14 uncle, everyone on this call, everyone on this
15 Commission that's Black has experienced something.
16 So Black men have been blatantly, disproportionately
17 targeted by racism.

18 And discrimination, since we landed in
19 America as slaves, it is universal and has left an
20 indisputable footprint in our community. They have
21 been lynched, castrated, and imprisoned in record
22 numbers. Despite this harsh treatment, so many have
23 survived and are noble members of society, just like
24 you on this call.

25 But it was hard, I'm sure. So, we must

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1 reach back and pull those have lost along the way.
2 It is my greatest hope that the work of the Commission
3 on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys will find a
4 solution. That's a little bit about me, and I look
5 forward to getting to know more about you today and
6 learning while serving on this important Commission
7 matters to you.

8 We also will take care of some
9 administrative tasks so we can put this Commission
10 into action. This is a wonderful day. This is a
11 transformative day. This is a transformative
12 legislation.

13 And all of us are making history. There
14 has never been any bill, legislation, or policy
15 passed by Congress to address Black men and boys.
16 Specifically, whenever I would run for office, they
17 would say, you won because it's the year of the woman.
18 Let's talk about that later.

19 At this point, I will turn the meeting
20 back over to our Program Manager, Dr. Marvin
21 Williams. And I want to say to each of you, from
22 this point on, your title is not congressman, not
23 doctor, not mister. You are Commissioner,
24 Commissioner Beatty, Commissioner Elder,
25 Commissioner Horsford.

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1 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Thomas M.
2 Colclough?
3 COMMISSIONER COLCLOUGH: Here.
4 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Marshall
5 Dillard?
6 COMMISSIONER DILLARD: Here.
7 (Simultaneous speaking.)
8 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Lawrence
9 Elder?
10 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Here.
11 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Gerald
12 Fosten?
13 COMMISSIONER FOSTEN: Here.
14 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Steven
15 Horsford?
16 COMMISSIONER HORSFORD: Here.
17 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Hakeem
18 Jeffries?
19 Commissioner Calvin Johnson?
20 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Here.
21 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Joseph E.
22 Marshall, Jr.?
23 COMMISSIONER MARSHALL: Here.
24 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Lucy McBath?
25 COMMISSIONER MCBATH: Here.

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1 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner LaShawn
2 McIver?

3 COMMISSIONER MCIVER: Here.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner O.J. Oleka?

5 COMMISSIONER OLEKA: Here.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Christian Rhodes?

7 COMMISSIONER RHODES: Here.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Al Sharpton?

9 Commissioner Al Sharpton?

10 Commissioner Frederica S. Wilson?

11 COMMISSIONER WILSON: Here.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: For the record, please
13 note that a quorum of the Commissioners is present
14 today. The next item of business is a vote on the
15 Chair. This is the first item on the agenda, that
16 we vote for the Chair and Secretary.

17 **a. DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON CSSBMB CHAIR**

18 **MARVIN WILLIAMS, CSSBMB PROGRAM MANAGER**

19 DR. WILLIAMS: And the Chair actually
20 will do the vote for the Secretary. But at this
21 point, I will actually do the Chair for -- the voting
22 for the Chair. The duty of each position is included
23 in the meeting packet.

24 Does everyone have a copy of the packet?
25 I will take those nods as yes. Is there anyone who

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1 does not have a copy of the packet?

2 Okay, very good. The statute requires
3 that our first meeting, we are to elect a Chair. At
4 this time, will someone make a motion for yourself or
5 someone else to serve as Chair?

6 COMMISSIONER MCBATH: I so nominate -- I
7 nominate Representative Commissioner Frederica
8 Wilson as Chair of the Commission of the Status of
9 young Black men and boys.

10 COMMISSIONER HORSFORD: I second the
11 motion.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: We have a motion on the
13 floor, and it has been second that Commissioner
14 Frederica Wilson will be the Chair of this
15 Commission. Are there any other nominations on the
16 floor?

17 Hearing none, I would ask that we would
18 vote on Frederica Wilson's position as Chair. And I
19 will call each person by name. Commissioner Beatty?

20 You can answer by saying aye.

21 Commissioner Bowman?

22 Commissioner Brewer?

23 COMMISSIONER BREWER: Aye.

24 COMMISSIONER BEATTY: I am sorry.
25 Commissioner Beatty, we're having some technical

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1 problems in my district office. Did you get my --

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 COMMISSIONER BEATTY: -- my loud aye?

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. I definitely
5 have it now.

6 COMMISSIONER BEATTY: And I will now
7 mute. I am so sorry.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Oh, no, no. No problem,
9 ma'am. Commissioner Clarke?

10 COMMISSIONER CLARKE: Aye.

11 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Colclough?

12 COMMISSIONER COLCLOUGH: Aye.

13 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Dillard?

14 COMMISSIONER DILLARD: Aye.

15 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Elder?

16 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Aye.

17 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Fosten?

18 COMMISSIONER FOSTEN: Aye.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Horsford?

20 COMMISSIONER HORSFORD: Aye.

21 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Johnson?

22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Aye.

23 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Marshall?

24 COMMISSIONER MARSHALL: Aye.

25 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner McBath?

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1 COMMISSIONER MCBATH: Aye.

2 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner McIver?

3 COMMISSIONER MCIVER: Aye.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Oleka?

5 COMMISSIONER OLEKA: Aye.

6 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Rhodes?

7 COMMISSIONER RHODES: Aye.

8 DR. WILLIAMS: Commissioner Sharpton?

9 And Commissioner Wilson?

10 Okay. At this time --

11 COMMISSIONER WILSON: Yeah.

12 DR. WILLIAMS: -- thank you so much for
13 your votes. And Commissioner Frederica Wilson has
14 been nominated and she has been -- and it's been
15 second and has been voted upon. And she is now Chair
16 of the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men
17 & Boys. Congratulations, Commissioner Wilson.

18 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
19 much to everyone for supporting my bid. We're going
20 to have an exciting time. I hope you're ready to
21 roll up your sleeves because I'm an overachiever.
22 I've worked really hard, and I'm going to need each
23 and every one of you to help me make history.

24 This is a Commission that's going to
25 travel. We're going to go to so many places to change

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1 this whole trajectory of Black men and boys. Thank
2 you so much. I'm honored to serve as Chair, and I
3 won't let you down. Thank you.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: And ma'am, the next order
5 for you as Chair is the vote on the Secretary, ma'am.

6 **c. DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON CSSBMB SECRETARY**

7 CHAIR WILSON: Okay. The statute
8 requires that in our first meeting, we elect a
9 Secretary.

10 COMMISSIONER MARSHALL: I would like to
11 put in a nomination for the Secretary Rev. Al
12 Sharpton.

13 CHAIR WILSON: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BEATTY: I additionally
15 would like to place into nomination the Rev. Al
16 Sharpton on National Action Network.

17 CHAIR WILSON: Do we have a second for
18 Rev. Al Sharpton?

19 COMMISSIONER CESAR: I'd like to second
20 that nomination for Rev. Al Sharpton.

21 COMMISSIONER BREWER:

22 CHAIR WILSON: Okay. We will now vote
23 on the Secretary. I will call the roll. And as I
24 call the roll, you will answer with the name of the
25 person you would like to serve as Secretary.

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1 Commissioner Joyce Beatty?

2 COMMISSIONER BEATTY: It's a great honor
3 that I vote for Rev. Al Sharpton.

4 CHAIR WILSON: Commissioner Brewer?

5 COMMISSIONER BREWER:

6 CHAIR WILSON: Commissioner Cesar?

7 COMMISSIONER CESAR: Dr. Rev. Al
8 Sharpton.

9 CHAIR WILSON: Kristen Clarke?

10 COMMISSIONER CLARKE: Rev. Sharpton.

11 CHAIR WILSON: Thomas Colclough?

12 COMMISSIONER COLCLOUGH: Rev. Sharpton.

13 CHAIR WILSON: Marshall Dillard?

14 COMMISSIONER DILLARD:

15 CHAIR WILSON: Lawrence Elder?

16 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Is it possible for
17 me to abstain?

18 CHAIR WILSON: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Okay. I abstain.

20 CHAIR WILSON: Gerald Fosten?

21 COMMISSIONER FOSTEN: I abstain as well.

22 CHAIR WILSON: Steven Horsford?

23 COMMISSIONER HORSFORD: Rev. Sharpton.

24 CHAIR WILSON: Calvin Johnson?

25 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Rev. Sharpton.

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1 CHAIR WILSON: Joseph Marshall?

2 COMMISSIONER MARSHALL: So I yield and
3 nominate and vote for Al Sharpton.

4 CHAIR WILSON: Lucy McBath?

5 COMMISSIONER MCBATH: Rev. Al Sharpton.

6 CHAIR WILSON: LaShawn McIver?

7 COMMISSIONER MCIVER: I abstain. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIR WILSON: O.J. Oleka, Commissioner
10 Oleka?

11 COMMISSIONER OLEKA: I abstain.

12 CHAIR WILSON: Christian Rhodes?

13 COMMISSIONER RHODES: I abstain.

14 CHAIR WILSON: And Frederica Wilson,
15 Rev. Al Sharpton. And the tally, Rev. Al Sharpton,
16 9 -- I'm sorry. Commissioner Sharpton, 9,5
17 abstentions. It is my honor to say that I move that
18 Rev. Sharpton serve as Secretary of the Commission.

19
20 CHAIR WILSON: Okay. And now we'll move
21 to the second order of business. I'm going to now
22 open up the floor for each Commissioner to give a
23 one-minute introduction.

24 **d. REMARKS FROM THE 19 COMMISSIONERS**

25 **OF THE CSSBMB**

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1 CHAIR WILSON: Please share information
2 about yourself and the work you hope to do and the
3 shared goal of improving the social status of Black
4 men and boys. This legislation to create the
5 Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys
6 was written for the Congressional Black Caucus and
7 was written in consultation with the Congressional
8 Black Caucus which is celebrating 50 years of service
9 to our nation. Give us a hand, 50 years. Thank you
10 so much.

11 Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman --
12 well, Commissioner Chairwoman Joyce Beatty serves on
13 this Commission. You heard her introduce herself.
14 According to the legislation, she appointed five
15 members to serve as it is written.

16 She appointed Congresswoman McBath and
17 she appointed Congresswoman Wilson and Commissioners
18 Jeffries, Steven Horsford, and Jamaal Bowman. Steven
19 is on the Commission today. The other two were -- you
20 heard from both of them in the process. And the other
21 two are on CODELS.

22 Steven himself is a champion in the cause
23 of justice for Black men and boys. And he has some
24 important legislation that is included by the
25 Congressional Black Caucus in Build Back Better. So,

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1 when we pass Build Back Better, we will pass
2 Commissioner Horsford's very important legislation
3 that addresses what we're discussing today.

4 According to the legislation, the only
5 members of Congress to serve on the Commission -- and
6 I wrote it -- shall be members of the Congressional
7 Black Caucus. And as a Caucus and as a Commission,
8 we will advance legislation through Congress on
9 behalf of Commissioners on the Social Status of Black
10 Men & Boys and the issues are many, in addition to
11 writing an annual report of our activities. Every
12 member of the Congressional Black Caucus at the time
13 of passage of this bill in 2020 sponsored the bill.

14 Commissioner Beatty, Chair of the
15 Congressional Black Caucus, we're going to ask
16 everybody to introduce themselves for one minute. I
17 know it's hard because it's hard for me. But this
18 is our champion here. We are so proud of the
19 leadership that the Chairman of the Congressional
20 Black Caucus has given us through this perilous time
21 that we have been in, including COVID-19, the passing
22 of the Rescue Act, passing of all our CARES 1, CARES
23 2, fighting for the infrastructure bill, fighting for
24 Build Back Better, keeping all of us intact.

25 We have very moderate members. We have

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1 very progressive members. We have all kind of
2 members. We have new members. We have old members. We
3 have young members. We have seasoned members. And she
4 is able to manage and keep all of us under this big
5 tent.

6 And America is really praising her for
7 breaking the log jam and the passage of the
8 infrastructure bill as she worked with the
9 Progressive Caucus and the other caucuses and our
10 whip, Clyburn, to come up with a solution to get that
11 very important bill passed. It's a bipartisan bill,
12 and we're going door to door tallying it. And we
13 hope that you would do the same. Commissioner Beatty,
14 one minute.

15 COMMISSIONER BEATTY: Thank you, and I
16 will do it in 30 seconds, I think. Our Madam Chair
17 has said a lot. I am Commissioner Joyce Beatty. I
18 hail from the great state of Ohio.

19 I am also the Chair of the 58-member
20 Congressional Black Caucus. I serve on the exclusive
21 Committee of Financial Services and the first ever
22 Chair of Diversity and Inclusion. My two grandbabies
23 make my day a lot better. But I am known for
24 connecting people to policies to politics.

25 I also believe with this Commission like

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1 the caucuses that I work with that our diversity is
2 our strength. And I am so glad to be a part of this
3 bipartisan caucus. I am an advocate. I'm a civil
4 rights fighter. But I'm also a businessperson.

5 With that, I yield back. I'm looking
6 forward to meeting everyone, hopefully in person when
7 we are at a better new normal. Thank you, Madam
8 Chair, and thank you for all those kind words about
9 me during this historic 50 years of the Congressional
10 Black Caucus.

11 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
12 much. And now our Vice Chair of the Congressional
13 Black Caucus, Commissioner Horsford. Please provide
14 us with an introduction, one minute.

15 COMMISSIONER HORSFORD: Thank you, Chair
16 Wilson. I want to commend you for your extraordinary
17 leadership and vision in establishing this important
18 Commission on the Status of Black boys and men. To my
19 Chairwoman Joyce Beatty and to all of the
20 Commissioners, I'm really honored to join with you.

21 I am a product of the Las Vegas
22 community. My mom is an immigrant from Trinidad. I
23 lost my father to gun violence. He was shot and killed
24 my freshman year in college. I am now raising three
25 children, two Black boys and a Black daughter, with

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1 my wife, Sonya. And I am honored to be on this
2 Commission.

3 Before I was ever elected to anything, I
4 was involved in community work helping our young
5 people get the support, the training, the education,
6 the mentoring that they need to be successful.
7 Someone gave me an opportunity. And I believe it's
8 our mission to give them an opportunity.

9 I'll just close by saying Commissioner
10 Wilson referred to the bill that I'm sponsoring to
11 Break the Cycle of Violence Act along with many of my
12 Congressional Black Caucus members, including Lucy
13 McBath and Lisa Blunt Rochester and others. This is
14 a 5-billion-dollar investment in community violence
15 intervention to disrupt violence, particularly gun-
16 related violence. Black men account for 6 percent
17 of the U.S. population, but we are 50 percent of the
18 gun homicides in this country.

19 And with our bill and the work of this
20 Commission, we are going to change that. We're going
21 to save lives, and we're going to help Black men and
22 boys understand their value and their worth. Thank
23 you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

24 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you so much,
25 Commissioner Horsford. And now this is a special

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1 Commissioner. She brings so much experience to this
2 Commission, and I'm so happy that she is on the
3 Commission.

4 And she is a member of a -- we have a
5 caucus, and all of these are members of the Commission
6 on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys. I don't
7 want to steal her thunder. So, I'm going to let her
8 tell her life story that is very, very heartbreaking,
9 Commissioner Lucy McBath.

10 COMMISSIONER MCBATH: Thank you so much,
11 and good afternoon to all of you, my fellow
12 Commissioners. As a member of Congress, I really
13 look forward to working with all of you as we set
14 forward on this very important mission that is ahead
15 of us. And let me start by congratulating my friend
16 and colleague, Commissioner Frederica Wilson, for her
17 extraordinary vision to just protect and serve
18 America's Black men and boys.

19 We are only here today because of the
20 tireless efforts of Commissioner Wilson. And she's
21 been a champion for Black men and boys ever since her
22 time as an elementary school principal. And that
23 tireless work is why we now have this Commission.

24 The work that we do here, we'll search
25 for ways to address just so many of the inequities in

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1 education and employment and housing and healthcare
2 and civil rights. And I believe that this Commission
3 really will help us create a better future for our
4 children and for our grandchildren because while we
5 know that we've come so far, we still have such a
6 long way to go. And I know from personal experience
7 that you can do everything that you believe is right
8 as a parent and still see your child, a young Black
9 man, be taken away from you.

10 I lost my son, Jordan, to unnecessary gun
11 violence in Jacksonville, Florida in 2012. I believe
12 that Jordan's father and I had done everything right.
13 But at the end of the day, he was a young Black man.
14 And I still feel that injustice every single day of
15 my life.

16 So, while I continue to look back on how
17 far we have come, I must also look forward to a future
18 without my son as more young Black men and males
19 around this country continue to suffer by these
20 inequities and unnecessary gun violence. So I see
21 how far we still have to go. This Commission on the
22 Social Status of Black Men & Boys can help us to
23 continue to move forward and move forward with that
24 strength and that hope that we need to give our
25 communities.

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1 And I kn. that we're going to all work
2 hard together toward a future that we believe is going
3 to be fair and equitable for everyone, in particular
4 our young Black males and men in America. I know we
5 have a lot of work to do before us. But I so look
6 forward to being on this journey with each and every
7 one of you. And I'm so grateful to be able to serve
8 with you.

9 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
10 much, Commissioner McBath. And now we have
11 Commissioner Brewer who was appointed by former
12 President Trump. Welcome, Mr. Brewer -- Commissioner
13 Brewer, one minute. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER BREWER: Thank you,
15 Commissioner Wilson. It's an honor and a pleasure,
16 and I just applaud you for your lifelong dedication,
17 particularly to these young boys down here in South
18 Florida. That's where I reside.

19 I'm currently teaching in prisons across
20 Florida and the United States every week. So, I get
21 to look at these Black men in their eyes every week
22 and understand the pain that they go through and the
23 situation that they've been put in. I also run a
24 small school down here in South Florida where we
25 literally only focus on underserved Black men. And

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1 I see them every day. Every day that that bell rings,
2 they come right to me. And so, I coach, and I
3 understand the issues that they face.

4 And I got to admit I don't agree with the
5 politics of a lot of people on this call. But I
6 think for this call right here, we need to all put
7 our political perspectives aside. We need to focus
8 because we all have the same goal and that's to help
9 these boys live the American dream.

10 I'm a proud American. I'm a proud
11 patriot. I love this county. I got a chance to play
12 in the National Football League. I've had an
13 opportunity to go on and do some incredible things
14 that God has anointed me and allowed me to do.

15 And I know that that dream can be felt
16 for the majority of the Black boys and men in this
17 nation. We just have to be smarter about policy,
18 about where our dollars are going. And we have to
19 hold our parents accountable.

20 And we have to start really
21 rehabilitating our young boys because that's what
22 they need, whether it's in a prison or schools. If
23 they're leaving out of there and they can't read and
24 write, we're not giving them a chance. And so, I
25 just can't tell you all how excited I am to be

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1 involved with this Commission. I'm a worker. So,
2 Ms. Wilson, put me to work because I'm ready. Put
3 me in. God bless you.

4 CHAIR WILSON: I love it. And we're not
5 bringing any politics into this meeting in this
6 Commission. This is all about the children, all
7 about the Black boys, all about the Black men and
8 lifting them up. I am so happy to have you on this
9 Commission. Thank you. And now we have Commissioner
10 Elder who was appointed by former President Trump.
11 One minute, Mr. Elder.

12 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Thank you, fellow
13 Commissioners, for having me. It's indeed an honor.
14 I am an attorney. I am a TV and radio talk show
15 host. I'm in about 300 markets. About 1.5 million
16 people listen to me every day. And for the last 30
17 years, I've been talking, writing about supporting
18 organizations that support Black men and Black boys,
19 including the Angel Tree Prison Fellowship.

20 Frederick Douglass said it is easier to
21 build strong children than to repair broken men. I
22 believe the number one problem facing Black America
23 is a large number of children enter the world without
24 a father married to the mother. It was Barack Obama
25 who once said, a kid raised without a father is 5

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1 times more likely to be poor and commit crime, 9 times
2 more likely to drop out of school, and 20 times more
3 likely to end up in prison. In 1965, 25 percent of
4 Black children entered the world without a father
5 married to the mother. Now that number is almost 70
6 percent.

7 I once interviewed Kweisi Mfume who was
8 then Chair of the NAACP. And I asked him, Mr. Mfume,
9 as between the presence of White racism or the absence
10 of Black fathers, which poses the bigger problem to
11 the Black community? Without missing a beat, he
12 said, the absence of Black fathers.

13 It is, again, far and away the most
14 important problem I think facing America and not just
15 Black children. Nearly half -- nearly 40 percent of
16 all children in America now enter the world without
17 a father married to the mother. Almost half of
18 Hispanic children do. Now 25 percent of White
19 children do, a number that was only 8 percent back in
20 1965.

21 I think we need to rethink lots of
22 policies that in my opinion are destroying the
23 family, up to and including what I consider to be the
24 welfare state. I think what we've done if we
25 incentivize women to marry the government, we've

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1 allowed men to abandon their financial and moral
2 responsibility. There are lots of other policies I
3 think that have come together to hurt the Black
4 family.

5 And I hope that we can have a discussion
6 about all these things so that we can turn this
7 situation around because as was pointed out, Black
8 people, Black men are roughly 6.5 percent of the
9 population. But nearly half of the homicides are
10 Black male victims and Black male perps. We need to
11 do something about that.

12 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you so much,
13 Commissioner Elder, for your perspective. And I've
14 heard you say that before. So, I know what you mean.
15 And we will have discussions about all of that. That
16 is nothing that we will ignore. That is so
17 powerfully evident in so many phases of life.

18 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Thank you.

19 CHAIR WILSON: That's why I think Mr.
20 Brewer and Dr. Marshall, all of us have set out a
21 mission on building a strong next, I guess you would
22 say, new Black little boys. And that's why we do
23 what we do. And we're going to need you to help us.
24 We're not going to just -- we're going to fight for
25 them because we know that is wrong.

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1 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Absolutely.

2 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. And now
3 Commissioner Marshall who was appointed by Speaker
4 Pelosi, one minute, Dr. Marshall - well, Commissioner
5 Marshall.

6 COMMISSIONER MARSHALL: Thank you,
7 Commissioner Wilson. What a wonderful opportunity.
8 This is fabulous. Like you say, this has never
9 happened before. And for me, it's like -- I won't
10 say a culmination, but just the result of all the
11 work that I've done.

12 My entire adult life has been working
13 with young Black men and boys. First, like yourself
14 being an educator, I taught middle school for 18
15 years. You all want a real job? I'll give you one.
16 And being an administrator and then just losing a lot
17 of my young people basically to the streets.

18 Started my own organization to do
19 something about that. And it's been great. It's
20 been great. I mean, it's -- but there's a lot more
21 to do.

22 All the numbers you cited, all of the
23 conditions we're in, I think we know what happens to
24 young Black men in this country. They're going to
25 jail or they're going to prison. I've heard it all.

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1 And this is what I do for a living. It is wonderful.

2 I just want to say, Commissioner Brewer,
3 I don't know what your politics are. But I certainly
4 think what you said about wanting to do something for
5 Black men is aligned with me. If we can agree on
6 that, we won't have a problem at all.

7 I will bring to this Commission the words
8 that I have lived by. My grandmother told me when I
9 was six years old, the more you know, the more you
10 owe. And as you go and progress in life, you must
11 help others to do likewise.

12 That is a motto I live by. That is the
13 work that I do. And that is what I'm bringing the
14 Commission. Let's make some more progress. Let's
15 make some progress for our Black men and boys. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
18 much. Appreciate it. Commissioner Oleka appointed
19 by Minority Leader McConnell, please provide one
20 minute.

21 COMMISSIONER OLEKA: Thank you, Madam
22 Chair. And it is an honor to be with you all today.
23 Again, my name is Dr. O.J. Oleka. I hail from the
24 Commonwealth of Kentucky. I'd like to thank Leader
25 McConnell for appointing me for this incredibly

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1 important Commission.

2 My background is in education and
3 government. My first job out of college was middle
4 school math teacher. And I'm excited to be in this
5 conversation because I'm the product of Nigerian
6 immigrants. And my father grew up in abject poverty,
7 came to the United States with my mother, and lived
8 the American dream, put three kids through college,
9 of course, their favorite baby boy. And the rest
10 they say is history.

11 I think that we've got an opportunity
12 here to create something for our Black men and boys
13 where they can either be my father's generation. Or
14 if they're in poverty, they can come out of it. Or
15 they can be my generation, a generation that benefits
16 from it.

17 There was absolutely no reason and no
18 excuse why this group of folks can't come together
19 and solve real problems and make sure that we can
20 have answers to the American people because that's
21 what they sent us here to do. My background, like I
22 said, is in education in government. I have a Ph.D.
23 in leadership and higher education. And what I want
24 to bring to this Commission is a lens through data
25 and to make sure that we're asking the important

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1 questions to really get to the heart of how we can
2 solve some of these problems.

3 And the last thing I'll say is this.
4 There are very few things that the American people
5 agree on and have agreed on politically in last couple
6 years. This is one of them. They know that we need
7 to solve the crisis that exists for Black men and
8 boys.

9 And so I'll echo my colleagues and say
10 that we need to put every piece of politics aside
11 because what we can do here is do something phenomenal
12 where the Congressional Black Caucus celebrates 100
13 years, they'll look back at 2021 and say it was this
14 little Commission of Black Men and Boys that cared
15 about their social status that really made the change
16 that we all try to see. And so, thank you. I'm
17 excited for the opportunity, and it's good to be here
18 with you all.

19 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you, Dr. Oleka --
20 Commissioner Oleka. We're happy that he's appointed
21 you. You're going to be great, a great Commissioner.
22 This is absolutely fabulous.

23 And now we have Commissioner Sharpton who
24 really needs no introduction. He has been elected
25 as the Secretary of the Commission. And I have known

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1 him for at least 35 years.

2 I have been in the back doors of bars
3 with him. I've worked on foster care. We've marched
4 in the street for voting rights, all kinds of things.

5 He came to bless me when I was elected to
6 Congress and reconcentrated me. And I just love him.
7 He knows that. He is the civil rights leader of this
8 century. Rev. Sharpton, bless you.

9 COMMISSIONER SHARPTON: Well, thank you,
10 Congresswoman Wilson. And so that my friend,
11 Congresswomen McBath and Congressman Horsford don't
12 get the wrong impression, it was a bar in Florida.
13 You wanted us to -- they were making Black go in the
14 back door and Whites go in the front.

15 So, you had me come march on it. We
16 weren't going in the bar to get a drink. I just want
17 to give clarity to everybody on that when you said we
18 were going in the back door because I don't want
19 people to misunderstand that I was having communion
20 outside of service.

21 But let me say that I am honored to be a
22 part of this Commission. I'm honored to be serving
23 with people that I know and respect, some that I hope
24 to get to know. I think it is a testimony to your
25 leadership that we have the Commission.

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1 I think it's a testimony to you having
2 been a real example of unifying people that it is
3 bipartisan because the issues of Black boys and Black
4 men is not a partisan issue. And if there's anything
5 we can agree on is this. I grew up raised by a single
6 mother. My father left when I was young. But if it
7 wasn't for mentors I had in the ministry and later
8 civil rights that became father figures to me, I
9 would've probably ended up like most of my
10 contemporaries in Brooklyn, in jail or dead by now.

11 And I believe that the engagement of all
12 of us can save millions of young men and that we can
13 collectively do so, both legislatively as well as
14 socially. Very few people know that two weeks after
15 I gave the eulogy for George Floyd's funeral, I gave
16 the eulogy in Brooklyn for a one-year-old young Black
17 boy was killed by a stray bullet in a gang fight.
18 The fact that that didn't make national news is the
19 reason we need this Commission because people are
20 dying every day in our communities. And it's been
21 normalized.

22 And I don't care if you're a Democrat,
23 Republican, Independent, or undecided, we all need to
24 rise up about that because all of us are subject to
25 that. And I think that we can unite around it. So,

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1 I am honored to be a part of the Commission, honored
2 to be elected, nominated by my Chairlady,
3 Congresswoman Beatty.

4 And unfortunately, I had to do my radio
5 show today. But any other time, I will get relief
6 to be a part of all of the Commissioners proceedings.
7 I take it as a priority in the work that I do. So
8 thank you and God bless you. And again, we went in
9 the bar to make sure Blacks could go in the front,
10 not that we would go and have an afternoon cocktail.

11 CHAIR WILSON: That's not the only place
12 we were. We did so many things.

13 (Simultaneous speaking.)

14 COMMISSIONER SHARPTON: That's correct.

15 CHAIR WILSON: -- Black boy's death in a
16 boot camp. We got rid of all the boot camps in
17 Florida. I mean, we did so, so much. And Rev.
18 Sharpton and I have been marching and for unions -
19 and everything.

20 I can't even -- and the one thing about
21 him is when you call him and it's about justice, he
22 doesn't even exchange words. He comes and he shows
23 up. And that is so important.

24 And I told you over and over and over
25 again, you are the civil rights leader of our time.

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1 It has fallen on your shoulders. We have no one else.
2 And you have taken the mantle, and you have marched
3 with me.

4 And that's why when I was Chair of the
5 CBC, I made sure that you received the highest award
6 that we give because all of the Congressional Black
7 Caucus members on this call our Chairwoman, Ms.
8 McBath, Mr. Horsford, Commissioners. So, from now
9 on, they know, they know what I'm saying. So, when
10 we see you, you're not going to be Rev. Sharpton.
11 You're going to be Commissioner Sharpton. So --

12 (Simultaneous speaking.)

13 COMMISSIONER SHARPTON: Thank you.

14 CHAIR WILSON: And we're going to get
15 some Commission pins and Commission t-shirts and
16 Commission hats. And we're going to be moving along,
17 Mr. Brewer. You'll see. We're going to make it
18 happen. Thank you so much.

19 And now Commissioner Dillard who has been
20 appointed by -- no, let me see, Commissioner Dillard
21 appointed by Minority Leader McCarthy. Commissioner
22 Dillard, raise your hand.

23 COMMISSIONER DILLARD: I'm right here.

24 CHAIR WILSON: Okay, welcome. How are
25 you?

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1 COMMISSIONER DILLARD: Thank you. Thank
2 you. Well, first of all, I have to write my thoughts
3 down because as an elementary school principal, I'm
4 used to dealing with kindergartners and all the way
5 up to fifth graders. So, when I speak, you know when
6 I speak to them, it's different than when I'm going
7 to have to speak to you guys. So, I've written down
8 what I need to say here.

9 And first of all, let me say that it's an
10 honor to serve on this Commission and humbling to be
11 among such distinguished people. So good morning.
12 With that being said, my name is Marshall Dillard.
13 I'm an elementary school principal, and I spent six
14 years as a teacher.

15 And I'm in my 27th year as an
16 administrator in our school district, 21 of those
17 years as a principal. I serve on the board of the
18 Driller to Driller Foundation. We provide
19 scholarship money to graduating seniors to attend
20 college for some trade school. And I'm the
21 Chairperson of the African American Network of Kern
22 County.

23 I received my B.A. from Stanford
24 University where I was a student athlete. After
25 graduating from Stanford with my B.A., I went to work

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1 for an organization called Pros for Kids. It was
2 founded by -- I'm not sure if you recognize his name,
3 Dr. Marshall, Delvin Williams, ex-49er -- founded by
4 Delvin Williams.

5 We went into high schools and taught an
6 anti-drug curriculum and used professional athletes
7 from various sports as our guest speakers. So, after
8 Pros for Kids, I went into teaching and earned my
9 master's in Education from the University of La
10 Verne. One of the reasons I went into administration
11 because I wanted to have a larger impact on the lives
12 of students outside of my classroom doors there
13 because as a teacher, your impact is mainly within
14 your four walls of your classroom.

15 So, I wanted to be behind the closed
16 doors who would make decisions into the lives of the
17 students -- how we're going to impact the lives of
18 students throughout our entire school and throughout
19 the entire school district. Never in my wildest
20 dreams did I envision I would be appointed to a
21 committee that would have such a national impact. So
22 I look forward to serving on this committee to work
23 with you and learn from you and learn from such an
24 esteemed collection of people that's going to enrich
25 the lives of Black males in our nation. Thank you.

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1 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you, Commissioner
2 Dillard. We look forward to working with you. Got
3 a lot of school principals on here. That's great.

4 And now this is our little star. We love
5 her. She is such -- oh, my God. We just think so
6 much of her in the Congressional Black Caucus and in
7 Congress altogether.

8 We have to work with her, and she has
9 always proven herself to be just phenomenal. This
10 is Commissioner Clarke. She was appointed by
11 Attorney General Garland. And we're going to ask her
12 to give us a minute. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER CLARKE: Thank you. Thank
14 you so much. It's great to be here and a real honor
15 to join this inaugural meeting of the Commission. I
16 am really proud and pleased to be here representing
17 the Civil Rights Division of the United States
18 Department of Justice.

19 I want to first start off by recognizing
20 the leadership of Commissioner Wilson. The
21 Commission was born out of years of advocacy,
22 research, hard work, and persistence, all led by
23 Representative and Commissioner Wilson. And the fact
24 that we are gathered here together, a diverse group
25 of government officials, community advocates,

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1 educators, researchers, and business leaders from
2 around and across the country and across the
3 ideological spectrum really is a testament to
4 Commissioner Wilson's coalition building and
5 leadership efforts.

6 So, thank you so much for bringing us
7 together. And it is not lost on me the gravity of
8 this task. We now have the collective responsibility
9 to drive the mission of this Commission forward and
10 to take a hard look at the social conditions faced by
11 Black men and Black boys across the country.

12 And the challenges, we know, are
13 critical. I just want to highlight a few statistics.
14 Black men are overrepresented among prisoners in this
15 country by a factor of five compared to the rest of
16 the population.

17 In 2019, only 28 percent of Black men
18 between the ages of 25 to 29 had a bachelor's degree
19 or higher compared to 40 percent of White men and
20 nearly half of White women. Prior to March of 2020,
21 Black men consistently had some of the highest
22 unemployment rates. And those rates only worsened
23 during the pandemic.

24 And recently, researchers have found that
25 Black men and Black boys are uniquely stigmatized in

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1 American society. According to one study on implicit
2 bias, more than 40 percent of White respondents
3 ranked many or almost all of Black men as violent
4 while White men are less than half as likely to be
5 described that way. So, we have a lot of work to do
6 to achieve racial justice and racial equity for Black
7 boys and Black men. We've got to work to ensure
8 equal access to democracy.

9 We've got to tackle these disparities in
10 arrest and incarceration rates, tackle poverty, work
11 on quality education and access to health care and so
12 much more. My hope is that this Commission will
13 begin its work with a simple step, listening to the
14 communities that we seek to uplift. And I look
15 forward to hopefully hearing testimony from Black
16 teenagers and young people who are living the very
17 experiences we seek to improve.

18 Just in closing, I'll note on a personal
19 note that as a mother who has had the talk with my
20 son on multiple occasions, I'm hopeful that we can
21 find ways to use our lived experiences and the force
22 of our federal civil rights laws to help confront
23 these challenges. I want to thank the Commission
24 staff for their hard work, and I look forward to
25 working with all of my fellow Commissioners in the

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1 road ahead. Thank you so much.

2 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
3 much, Commissioner Clarke, for all that you do and
4 all that you are going to contribute to this
5 Commission. We appreciate you. Commissioner
6 Johnson who was appointed by Secretary Fudge. Please
7 provide for one minute.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes, Madam
9 Chairwoman and Commissioners, it is both an honor and
10 a privilege to be working with you all on this. I
11 just want to give you some background. I'm a native
12 Washingtonian. I have lived in Washington, D.C. for
13 most of my life.

14 And my work has basically been driven --
15 my education and my work has been driven by my
16 experiences growing up in Washington D.C. I am
17 currently at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
18 Development. I operate out of the Office of Policy,
19 Development, and Research where I'm the Deputy
20 Assistant Secretary for the Office of Research,
21 Evaluation, and Monitoring.

22 I actually provide executive leadership
23 to the Department on demonstrations, evaluations, and
24 research focusing on programs and policy in the areas
25 that I think that we're going to cover, economic self-

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1 sufficiency, housing mobility, homelessness, housing
2 discrimination, and various issues at the
3 intersection of housing and health, housing and
4 education, housing and justice. And so, I am really
5 excited about the opportunity to serve with you all
6 on this Commission. Prior to joining HUD, I spent
7 my career designing program models and actually
8 evaluating programs at think tanks, university, and
9 also for the mayor of the District of Columbia.

10 Specifically, I spent most of my career
11 on community crime control policies to include youth
12 and adult diversion programs which many of you have
13 actually mentioned, community policing, community
14 corrections, and community violence interventions.
15 And I am HUD's representative to the community
16 violence intervention group now run out of the White
17 House called the Collaborative that I believe that's
18 what the five billion dollars is actually going to
19 expand and support. I look forward to sharing things
20 that I'm learning across the various work streams
21 that I'm in.

22 I hope to bring these experiences to bear
23 on the work of the Commission with a focus on racial
24 and social equity and community engaged approaches to
25 program and policy development. I am no stranger to

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1 basically going in prisons and talking to inmates,
2 juvenile detention facilities, public housing
3 developments. I really do enjoy a community engaged
4 approach.

5 Communities need to be engaged. They
6 have a lot of solutions, and I welcome the opportunity
7 to do that type of work with you all as well. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. We look
10 forward to it. We know about Black men and
11 homelessness and Black people and homelessness. So
12 give Ms. Fudge a thumbs up for sending you. We
13 appreciate it.

14 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Certainly will.
15 I certainly will. Thank you.

16 CHAIR WILSON: Okay. Commissioner
17 McIver appointed by Secretary Becerra, Health and
18 Human Services.

19 COMMISSIONER MCIVER: Thank you,
20 Commissioner Wilson. Good afternoon, everyone. My
21 name is Dr. LaShawn McIver, and I am truly honored to
22 serve as a Commissioner on this Commission for the
23 Social Status of Black Men & Boys.

24 I am the Director of the Office of
25 Minority Health at the Centers for Medicare &

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1 Medicaid Services within the Department of Health and
2 Human Services. Our agency is the largest insurer
3 of health care in the country. And our office plays
4 a role in ensuring that the needs of minority
5 populations are met.

6 I am very grateful for Secretary
7 Becerra's appointment for this critical role during
8 this time of transformation and historic
9 opportunities within the health care system itself.
10 Having spent my career focused on public health and
11 addressing the needs of minority populations, this
12 work is extremely important to me, not only as a
13 public health physician but as a daughter, as a
14 sister, as a wife and a mother, having seen the impact
15 of gun violence and other issues that folks have
16 talked about on the call. This is something that
17 I've seen firsthand living in Baltimore, living in
18 parts of North Carolina, and living in other parts of
19 the world and recognize that we have an opportunity
20 here on a global stage to make a difference.

21 Black men currently suffer worse health
22 than other racial groups in the U.S. Subsequently,
23 Black men have the lowest life expectancy and highest
24 mortality rates, specific conditions compared to both
25 women and men of other racial and ethnic groups. And

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1 there's no single reason that can be attributed to
2 Black male poor health outcomes.

3 Instead, racial discrimination,
4 unemployment, lack of affordable health services, low
5 health literacy, poverty, access to health insurance,
6 and insufficient medical and social services tailored
7 to their needs. So my hope as a participant in this
8 condition is that we emerge as a catalyst of positive
9 authentic engagement and paradigm shifting practices,
10 that our interconnectedness reinforces a shared
11 vision for our country to move from a current state
12 of growing health inequities due to multiple
13 historical and social factors, to a state where we
14 live in a thriving nation of shared purpose and
15 prosperity.

16 I also hope to advance the mission of HHS
17 to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans
18 by providing for effective health and human services
19 by fostering sound sustained advances in science,
20 underlying medicine, public health, and social
21 services. So thank you so much for the opportunity,
22 and I'm looking forward to serving alongside my
23 fellow Commissioners. Thank you.

24 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. We appreciate
25 it. And we know that Black men don't go to the

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1 doctor. So, we're going to be working on health
2 initiatives to get them prostate -- all kinds of
3 things. And I appreciate you being here with us.
4 And now Commissioner Rhodes from the Secretary of
5 Education.

6 COMMISSIONER RHODES: Thank you so much.
7 And thanks, Madam Wilson, Commissioner Wilson,
8 members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and
9 Secretary Cardona for the opportunity to serve on
10 this historic Commission. My name is Christian
11 Rhodes.

12 I currently have a couple jobs at the
13 Department. I currently serve as Chief of Staff for
14 the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and
15 also Senior Advisor to the Secretary in the Office of
16 the Secretary. And I'm honored to participate and
17 to engage.

18 I am a blessed man of the son of my father
19 from Brooklyn, New York, Rev. Sharpton, my mother
20 from North Philadelphia, 32nd and Diamond as she
21 reminds me often. And had the opportunity to grow
22 up as a son of a military brat. So, we moved across
23 the country and saw all over the -- all of the United
24 States, the opportunity that existed but also some of
25 the challenges.

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1 I currently am a father of two small
2 Black boys, 4 and 1. My wife had our one-year-old
3 in April of last year in the middle of this pandemic.
4 And as we sit down together at dinner tables and at
5 church and at gatherings and events, I'm thinking
6 about their future. And that is influencing much of
7 the decisions and engagements that I'm currently in.

8 Just small things around education it
9 seems, which is one of the largest topics that we're
10 engaged in this time in our country. But we also
11 know that the challenges and opportunity gaps that
12 has shown a light during COVID existed well before
13 COVID. But one of the things that I believe this
14 administration is focused on and I'm excited to
15 hopefully engage with this Commission on is the
16 social and emotional and mental health needs of our
17 students, in particular our Black boys.

18 This is a topic that is oftentimes done
19 unnoticed. But we know that if we do not address the
20 social and emotional needs of our students, we will
21 likely see them in a lot of other ways. And I'm
22 thankful, Congresswoman Wilson, for your leadership
23 as a principal and the 5,000 mentors that you pulled
24 together in Florida but also some of the other
25 educators who are on this call.

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1 Lastly, I was a Chief of Staff of Prince
2 George's County Public Schools in Maryland where I
3 currently reside. We had 40,000 young men. And I
4 think about, what does that diversity pipeline look
5 for educators?

6 What if it's one percent, five percent,
7 ten percent of those young Black men who are currently
8 growing up in Upper Marlboro and Suitland and Seat
9 Pleasant? What if they went into education? And
10 what if the same thing happened in New York and L.A.
11 and Houston, Texas?

12 So, look forward to the conversation, and
13 the Department is willing and able to help in any way
14 we can to support this vision. Thank you.

15 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
16 much. We have so many educators. That's so great.
17 Commissioner Cesar, who was appointed by Secretary
18 Walsh, one minute.

19 COMMISSIONER CESAR: Good afternoon,
20 everyone. My name is Commissioner Richard Cesar. I
21 currently serve in the Biden-Harris administration as
22 the Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at
23 the U.S. Department of Labor.

24 I'm honored to be here today among such
25 distinguished individuals. And I'm thankful to

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1 Secretary Walsh for the appointment to this
2 Commission. I commend you, Congresswoman and Chair
3 Wilson, for your leadership. And I look forward to
4 working for all of you on this critical initiative to
5 improve conditions for Black men and boys in this
6 country.

7 I've been very blessed in my life.
8 Although my parents immigrated to this country from
9 Haiti over 50 years ago with very little, they worked
10 hard to provide a life for me filled with love,
11 support, and opportunity that I know is not a reality
12 for everyone. I attribute to my success to their
13 sacrifices and guidance, and I'm a strong believer
14 that to whom much is given, much is expected.

15 It has been one of my life goals to deepen
16 my understanding of how individuals progress and
17 succeed in life and to use my knowledge, skills, and
18 experiences to create opportunities for others. I've
19 dedicated my life to public service utilizing my
20 legal background to serve in a variety of settings,
21 from representing incarcerated men and women in
22 Wisconsin prisons to advocating for inclusionary
23 transportation policies as an appointee in the Obama
24 administration to helping communities across Los
25 Angeles County connect to workforce training, mental

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1 health and substance abuse services, and other
2 critical support in pursuit of good paying union job
3 opportunities or providing critical access to capital
4 to minority owned businesses devastated by the
5 disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6 I've always focused on using my skills to
7 better lives for others. In my current role at the
8 U.S. Department of Labor, I believe I'm well situated
9 to access and understand labor force participation
10 and employment data. And I'm thankful to be working
11 each day to create a more equitable workforce that
12 will lead to increased economic conditions for
13 communities that have been historically left behind.

14 I plan to not only bring my professional
15 perspective to this Commission but also highlight --
16 but also insights from my personal upbringing as a
17 Black man in America, son of immigrants who has lived
18 in and traveled to nearly all regions of this country
19 as well as abroad. So, I'm beyond thankful for this
20 opportunity to serve and look forward to meeting
21 everyone and embarking on the work ahead. Thank you,
22 Chair Wilson.

23 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
24 much. And now we have Commissioner Colclough.

25 COMMISSIONER COLCLOUGH: Colclough.

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1 CHAIR WILSON: Alright.

2 COMMISSIONER COLCLOUGH: Alright. Thank
3 you and good afternoon, Commissioner Wilson and
4 fellow Commissioners. Again, my name is Thomas
5 Colclough and I am from North Carolina. And as many
6 have stated, I'm a father of a 26-year-old daughter
7 and my son will be 23 this weekend. And as others
8 have stated, I've had the talk and we have the talk
9 at least once a month frequently.

10 It's my honor to serve with each of you.
11 And I was to thank Chair Burrows for appointing me to
12 this Commission. And I would be remiss if I did not
13 thank Commissioner Wilson for leading the initiative
14 for the creation of the Commission on Social Status
15 of Black Men & Boys.

16 I've been with EEOC for over 30 years,
17 and that's the Equal Employment Opportunity
18 Commission. And I have the privilege to be on the
19 front line every day with a dedicated group of
20 professionals. And our job is to prevent and remedy
21 unlawful employment discrimination in the workplace.

22 I feel that one of the most pressing
23 issues that we need to address is employment
24 opportunities. As you know that today that the
25 unemployment rate for Black men is two times the rate

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1 of White men. Statistics says that's impossible.
2 Statistically.

3 But I believe that economic equality can
4 best be obtained by ensuring that Black men and boys,
5 that they have fair and equal access to employment
6 opportunities and more specifically to make sure that
7 they have an opportunity enter, thrive, and excel in
8 the workplace. I think we've got to change the
9 narrative of unemployment for Black men and boys.
10 And I'm thrilled to be here with you all to start
11 that discussion. Thank you, Commissioner Wilson.

12 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
13 much. We look so forward to working with you,
14 bringing all of your experience. We now will hear
15 from Commissioner Fosten who is appointed by the U.S.
16 Civil Rights Commission, Staff Director Morales.
17 Commissioner Fosten, you might be -- you have to
18 unmute probably.

19 COMMISSIONER FOSTEN: Yes, sorry about
20 that. Thank you, Commissioner Wilson. Thank you
21 for this opportunity. It's a pleasure with gratitude
22 that I participate on this panel.

23 I share optimism for the purposes of this
24 new Commission. And as a social scientist with the
25 Commission on Civil Rights, I express tremendous

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1 gratitude to serve with a distinguished panel of
2 Commissioners. And I'm excited and confident
3 throughout -- I'm excited and confident of such a
4 talented assembly that can produce positive outcomes.

5 I have traveled extensively throughout
6 the United States, and I'm very much in tune with the
7 challenges and needs facing Black men and boys. I
8 have witnessed cultural violence, and a culture of
9 poverty firsthand. Sometimes I consider myself very
10 fortunate to have made it this far.

11 I've participated in successful models of
12 the K through 12 levels, special needs organizations
13 -- special needs educational organizations, and
14 reentering citizens. I would like to help build and
15 forge consensus and pluralistic outcomes regarding
16 the nature of social issues we address. I desire we
17 do more than put a Band-Aid on issues within the
18 community.

19 My desire is that we go to the root causes
20 and break generational poverty and social
21 disparities. I hail from the south. I've traveled
22 extensively throughout the United States, Memphis,
23 Baltimore, D.C.

24 I have a large portion of my family from
25 Detroit, some from South Side, Chicago, State Street.

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1 I traveled to South Central L.A. And a lot of the
2 issues I see within the Black community and among
3 Black men and boys are the same. And like I said, I
4 like to go to the root causes, not just put a Band-
5 Aid on those issues.

6 Behind those statistics is a human being.
7 Like one of the Commissioners said, these statistics
8 have been normalized or the homicides. But behind
9 that statistic is a human being who's probably broken
10 mentally and emotionally and has fell through the
11 cracks and the system failed them. And because the
12 system failed them when they were young, we will fear
13 them when they get older when we see them walking
14 down the street.

15 So, in my conclusion, it's my desire that
16 hundreds of years into the future, history will be
17 favorable to this Commission. And the narrative
18 would be that this Commission was instrumental in
19 helping play a part in ensuring that this nation
20 remains great. And I'm enthusiastic that we will
21 provide a successful and enumerable opportunities
22 from which to build upon going forward in the future.

23 So, with that, I again am very humble to
24 participate on this Commission. And I am very in
25 tune with the needs and the challenges of Black men

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1 and Black boys. Thank you.

2 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you.
3 You're the last one to introduce themselves, and you
4 have left us with a very moving message. And we will
5 remember what you said because you were last.

6 And it speaks volumes for all of us
7 because all of us regardless, just like Mr. Elder
8 said and everybody said, this has nothing to do with
9 politics. This has to do with the population that
10 we are going to help. Mr. Brewer said it first. So
11 let me repeat.

12 When the bill came out of the Senate, it
13 was Democrats and Republicans. It came out of the
14 House, Democrats and Republicans. That doesn't
15 happen often.

16 But after George Floyd was murdered and
17 that became front page news and people were marching
18 in the street, people began to pay attention to these
19 Black men and boys and what they were doing. And all
20 of a sudden, my bill came up out of the hopper. And
21 they passed it out of the Senate with the help of the
22 Republicans.

23 Marco Rubio really sponsored it out of
24 the Senate, got it over to the House. Leader Pelosi
25 said, Congresswoman Wilson, it's about time. And

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1 this bill passed. So I am just thrilled.

2 **b. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

3 CHAIR WILSON: So, without objection,
4 the agenda provided for this meeting is adopted.

5 **e. PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT & INTRODUCTION OF CSSBMB**

6 **STAFF-MARVIN WILLIAMS,**

7 **CSSBMB PROGRAM MANAGER**

8 CHAIR WILSON: At this point, I will turn
9 the meeting back over to Program Manager Williams to
10 introduce the staff of the United States Commission
11 on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys and the
12 United States Commission on Civil Rights and to
13 provide his Program Manager support. Doesn't that
14 sound so important? The United States Commission on
15 Civil Rights and we are the United States Commission
16 on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys. Now we got
17 the Black men and boys up there real high. Go ahead,
18 Marvin.

19 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Thank you,
20 Madam Chair. What an honor to serve, and I want to
21 highlight the enthusiasm that I bring to this
22 process. I have never been so proud of serving. I
23 served in 30 years in the United States Air Force,
24 and I thought I was a proud member of our country
25 then. But serving this Commission in this capacity,

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1 I am tremendously moved every day.

2 I eat and breathe this Commission because
3 this is what I do. And I just want to say I could
4 not be here today without the support of Mauro Morales
5 who is the Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on
6 Civil Rights. And his team, they've worked together
7 as an executive team that really, really got this
8 going.

9 They were the nuts and bolts really of
10 the organization. And they really helped me and
11 really guided me through this entire process. And
12 they assured me that I was never ever alone, and I
13 wasn't, even though I was the only staff person in
14 this Commission.

15 And so basically what I want to kind of
16 talk about just for a short programmatic area here
17 are three areas that I really want to highlight. One
18 is the historical perspective. The second is the
19 direction in which we're going.

20 And of course, you kind of talked about
21 those five program areas. So how did we get here?
22 We got here by 400 years of history that we can't
23 ignore. And people have brought that up in various
24 ways today.

25 And we want to begin to reframe the story

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1 of Black men and boys in America. That's what we
2 want to do. And our history was not without a
3 struggle.

4 In the words of Toni Morrison, by no
5 means do I want to romanticize the history of Black
6 men and boys. But I want to lead a process of
7 reorienting our country the way people think about
8 who we are as Black men and boys and what we will
9 become in our society. And so, with that, with
10 Representative, Chair, or Commissioner Chair Wilson,
11 I will begin to map a course of direction for the
12 Commission.

13 And I am aware this course can change,
14 and it will change. And I am prepared to navigate
15 that journey. And so, in those program -- those five
16 program areas that you all mentioned today that you
17 highlighted so well, I just want to be a part of being
18 able to work with you and work for you in bringing
19 about those five program areas into fruition.

20 Is it an easy process? No, it's not
21 easy. I'm not looking for easy. But what I am
22 looking for is to be competent in this whole realm of
23 what we're doing in our country.

24 Again, I am very, very proud to serve in
25 this capacity. And you have my information. Please

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1 feel free to reach out to me, call me, text me, email
2 me. And I will guarantee you that I will respond to
3 you in a like manner.

4 In that chord, I just want to say thank
5 you for providing the staff that I have, for Mauro
6 Morales. We have one GS person who's serving, and
7 you have been in contact with her. And then we have
8 an attorney who is a contractor. And we also have a
9 media specialist who's a contractor and one other
10 contractor who is an administrative agent.

11 And so again, I just want to say thank
12 you for your work. Thank you for what we're going
13 to do in the future. I look forward to the
14 opportunity of bringing about this kind of change in
15 our country. Back over to you, Chair Wilson.

16 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Chair Wilson, may I
17 say something real quickly, please?

18 CHAIR WILSON: Commissioner Elder,
19 you're recognized.

20 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Thank you. With my
21 apologies, I have to go right now to start my radio
22 show. But I want to just say one thing real quickly.

23 Again, thank you so much for inviting me
24 to be part of this. This is a major, major, major
25 effort for a most important problem in our country.

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1 As you may or may not know, I was recently a candidate
2 for governor of California, obviously not successful.
3 Otherwise, I'd be doing this from the mansion in
4 Sacramento.

5 But two of my issues were education and
6 homelessness. Seventy-five percent of Black boys in
7 California cannot read at state level proficiency,
8 and the math scores are even worse. And 6.5 percent
9 of the population of California is Black.

10 But 40 percent of the homeless according
11 to a study by HUD -- I know we have a Commissioner
12 from HUD. Forty percent of the homeless population
13 here in California is Black. Very, very important
14 issues and I hope we will be able to tackle. But
15 thank you, and my apologies for having to leave.

16 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. We appreciate
17 it. And I was on the radio.

18 COMMISSIONER ELDER: Thank you.

19 CHAIR WILSON: Spread the good news.

20 COMMISSIONER ELDER: I will.

21 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you. Thank you so
22 much. Well, we're at the end of the meeting, and I
23 want to thank all of you. Thank all of you for being
24 here with us.

25 **b. SELECT MEETING DATE FOR DECEMBER ORGANIZATIONAL**

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MEETING

1
2 CHAIR WILSON: The next meeting we're
3 looking at is Monday, November 13th at 1:00 p.m. We
4 will set -- on that meeting date, we'll set a
5 Commissioners' calendar for 2022. You will receive
6 an email with potential dates from the Program
7 Manager Williams or Commissioner Williams the week
8 after Thanksgiving. And you will be able to give
9 input as to whether you'll be able to make it.

10 I'd like to share a few ideas about what
11 we'll be doing. This is going to be a traveling
12 Commission. We will go to a federal prison and we're
13 going to visit death row.

14 We're going to partner with the NFL to
15 address the police and youth and cut down on the
16 tensions that we know exist between Black men and the
17 police. Black men and the police have been at odds
18 and in tense situations since slavery. And we will
19 work with organizations like the National Action
20 Network, the NAACP, the 5000 Role Models of
21 Excellence and other mentoring programs, the program
22 that Commissioner Brewer spoke of.

23 And we're going to listen and we're going
24 to involve the community in our work on the
25 Commission. So we might show up in Chicago to meet

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1 with the mayor and the police force to find out what's
2 happening and listen to little boys who are carrying
3 guns. I have actually gone into prison and met with
4 child murderers.

5 And they always say to me, Mr. Brewer,
6 that the reason they -- I say, why do you -- what
7 could I have done to prevent you from being in this
8 place today? And they always say, if only I had
9 someone who cared and someone to listen, someone to
10 guide me and help me make the right choices other
11 than my peers. That's it.

12 So, we're going to listen. We're going
13 to work on that. I want to thank each of you for
14 committing your time and energy to the Commission.

15 I think that we will also talk about
16 legislation that is stuck in Congress and how as a
17 Commission we can move it forward, legislation like
18 police reform, anti-lynching reform, and voting
19 rights. We're going to see what we can do as a
20 Commission to advocate for all of these challenges.
21 And I want to thank all of you for committing your
22 time and energy.

23 I believe together we can make a
24 difference. Whenever I ran for office, people would
25 always say it was declared because this was the year

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1 of the woman, every time I ran for the school board,
2 the House of Representatives, the Senate -- Florida
3 Senate, and for Congress. You won because it was the
4 year of the woman.

5 That's been 30 years. When will it be
6 the year of the Black boy? We have a Commission. We
7 need a year. So we're going to get the entire nation
8 on their side so people won't fear them, profile them,
9 and despise them.

10 I had a school that was totally
11 integrated, and I had such a great, great
12 relationship with my teachers. But they didn't even
13 know that they were biased. And let me tell you what
14 I experienced.

15 A teacher has a pencil on her desk and a
16 little White girl knocks the pencil off the desk.
17 The teacher is going to go down to the floor with her
18 to help her pick up the pencil and put it back on her
19 desk. If a little White boy, a little Hispanic boy,
20 a little Hispanic girl, a little Black girl knocked
21 the pencil off the desk, the teacher is going to
22 simply say, please pick up my pencil. And they will
23 go down and pick up the pencil.

24 If a little Black boy knocked the
25 teacher's pencil off the desk, the teacher is going

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1 to say, you didn't have no business up here anyway.
2 Why are you out of your seat? Get my pencil! Go sit
3 down!

4 So, this Black boy begins to internalize
5 the difference in the responses in his classroom
6 which this teacher is not even aware of that's what
7 she's doing. So, he begins to say, why am I
8 different? Why is she talking to me like that? What
9 did I do?

10 And so, these are the things that we got
11 to sensitize this nation because I consider these
12 little Black boys as endangered species. And we live
13 in a nation that invests billions of dollars to save
14 endangered species, the whale, the Key deer, the bald
15 eagle. I want you Commissioners to ponder this
16 question. What is more important, saving animals or
17 saving young Black boys?

18 So, in 2022, we are going to declare
19 through Congress and a resolution as the year of the
20 Black boy. I want you to think about it. Think
21 about it real hard.

22 And when we reconvene in December or if
23 you want to reach out to me before then, give me your
24 thoughts and let's see what happens. We know it's
25 dangerous. We know what's going to happen.

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1 The women, they're going to say, what
2 about the girls? Well, the children used to ask me,
3 what about the girls? And I would say, I'm trying
4 to build you another generation of good strong
5 husbands and good strong fathers for your children,
6 and they stopped.

7 So, we've got to be ready to take the
8 brunt of this. And this is just a year now. We're
9 just doing this. This is the year of the Black boy.
10 So you think about it. If there's no more business
11 to come before this Commission. Thank you so much.

12 COMMISSIONER OLEKA: Madam Chair, I'm
13 sorry. I've got one question. I missed that meeting
14 date. What was that next meeting date, Madam Chair?

15 CHAIR WILSON: December 13th at 1:00 p.m.
16 and you're going to get a notice real soon. Is that
17 a bad day?

18 COMMISSIONER OLEKA: No, ma'am. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIR WILSON: Okay, okay. Thank you so
21 much. This is a historical day, we are making
22 history, and we're going to continue to march
23 forward. We're not going to let anything or anybody,
24 any organization, any organized group stop us because
25 we know how they come after you.

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1 I know because I've been advocating for
2 Black men and boys and Mr. Marshall too since I was
3 in high school. So, we're not going to let anybody
4 stop us, Mr. Brewer. We're going forward. We are
5 moving on, Commissioner Clarke. We've got this. So,
6 you all be good. This meeting is adjourned.

7 (Simultaneous speaking.)

8 **IV. CHAIR REMARKS/ADJOURN MEETING**

9 COMMISSIONER BREWER: Ms. Wilson --
10 Commissioner Wilson.

11 CHAIR WILSON: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER BREWER: If you don't mind
13 because you got me really excited, if you all don't
14 mind if I close us --

15 (Simultaneous speaking.)

16 COMMISSIONER BREWER: -- out in a prayer?

17 CHAIR WILSON: Oh, Mr. Brewer, go ahead.

18 COMMISSIONER BREWER: I said if you don't
19 mind if I close us out in a prayer.? I just feel
20 like what we're taking on is a spiritual battle. And
21 I don't know about you all, but I was raised in a
22 church house.

23 And so, I just want to just quickly just
24 bow our heads and ask God to continue to give us
25 wisdom and strength and discernment, dear God, for us

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1 to come together as brothers and sisters on one
2 mission to God. James 1:27 says, pure religion and
3 undefiled before God the Father is this: to serve the
4 fatherless and the widow in their trouble and to keep
5 oneself unspotted from the world. And we just ask
6 you, dear Father God, that we go out and serve our
7 most underserved population in America.

8 We know that we have a lot of kings that
9 are just waiting to be hatched, dear God. And the
10 opportunity that this great nation provides can only
11 come through you. So just give us the wisdom and
12 discernment and let us stay humble before you, Father
13 God. Amen.

14 CHAIR WILSON: Amen. Everybody, let the
15 people say it.

16 (Chorus of Amen.)

17 CHAIR WILSON: Thank you so much. Thank
18 you.

19 (Simultaneous speaking.)

20 CHAIR WILSON: -- Commissioner Clarke.

21 COMMISSIONER CLARKE: Yes, take care.

22 CHAIR WILSON: Okay. Take care.
23 Alright, everybody. See you soon.

24 COMMISSIONER MCBATH: Bye, everyone.

25 CHAIR WILSON: Wonderful. I am so proud

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1 today and we were able to get so much accomplished.
2 Thank you so much. Thank you. Bye-bye. Lucy, see
3 you. Marvin, okay.

4 DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, ma'am.

5 CHAIR WILSON: Okay. Dr. Fosten, Mr.
6 Fosten, okay. Thank you. All right.

7 (Whereupon the above-entitled matter
8 went off the record at 2:44 p.m.)

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