

Cleveland City Council passes ordinance establishing a commission on Black women and girls, Mayor Bi

Written by Kathy

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Pictured are Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, Ward 7 Councilwoman Stephanie Howse, and Ward 4 Councilwoman Deborah Gray(wearing tan)

New Cleveland Commission on Black Women and Girls Seeks Social, Health and Economic Equality Established By Cleveland City Council

The legislation was sponsored by Mayor Bibb and co-sponsored by Councilwomen Stephanie Howse and Deborah Gray and is designed to address systemic issues facing Cleveland, a largely

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Black major American city, and a city deemed one of the worst places to live for Black women

Monday, June 6, 2022 – Cleveland, OH — Cleveland City Council at its regular meeting on Monday unanimously passed legislation ([ORD 373-2022](#)) to create the Cleveland Commission on Black Women and Girls.

Mayor Justin Bibb announced the new city ordinance that he sponsored alongside Ward 4 Councilwoman Deborah Gray and Ward 7 Councilwoman Stephanie Howse, east side council persons and the only two Black women among 17 councilpersons.

The mayor said that the commission's mission is to improve the quality of life for women and girls by advocating, initiating, and championing programs and legislation to strengthen families and communities. The vision is simple—women and girls in the City of Cleveland deserve access to unlimited opportunities to achieve social, health and economic equality.

To make this a reality, Black women and girls from across the city must have a seat at the table

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and a voice where decisions are made, he said.

"Cleveland is the worst city in America for Black women. We have a problem and Black women are the experts to help us solve it," said Mayor Bibb, 34 and elected in November by Cleveland voters, and the city's fourth Black mayor. "When Black women thrive, families and communities thrive."

Cleveland is a largely Black major American city of some 372,000 residents that sits in Cuyahoga County, a 29 percent Black county and Ohio's second largest of its 88 counties. And both Cleveland, where most of its residents live below the poverty line, and Cuyahoga County, a county of roughly 1.2 million people, are Democratic strongholds.

The Cleveland Commission on Black Women and Girls will serve as an advisor to the mayor and city council and make recommendations based on a data-driven approach, the mayor said Monday.

The commission will consist of 12 regular members and two ex officio* members, including the following:

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- One Black woman representing the faith community
- One Black woman representing corporate Cleveland
- One Black woman representing higher education
- One Black woman who is a MD within one of the hospital systems
- One Black woman representing social services
- One Black woman representing labor
- One Black woman representing education (primary, secondary and/or pre-school)
- One Black woman representing grassroots organizations in Cleveland
- Two Black women in college
- Two Black students representing ages 11-17
- * One Black woman from the Mayor's Office
- * One Black woman to represent Cleveland City Council

"This is real progress toward freeing Black women from so many dead-ends in their lives," said Councilwoman Deborah Gray, a co-sponsor of the ordinance. "I see this commission as a historical step toward empowering Black women and girls who for so long have been denied so much."

The commission will also establish a girls' subcommittee to identify, explore and recommend solutions to obstacles that Black girls are facing in the city and, particularly, in the schools.

"This commission is creating an opportunity for Black women and girls to work in partnership with the City of Cleveland on the agenda that they believe is best," said Councilwoman

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Stephanie Howse, also a co-sponsor of the ordinance. "To get results, we must give the power to Black women. They know what is needed."

Enlightened Solutions, the Cleveland research and advocacy firm behind the Project Noir study, is consulting with the city on this initiative, providing both data and expertise in developing and gathering the metrics required to measure the Commission's progress over time.

In response to the [2020 Bloomberg CityLab report](#) that ranked Cleveland as the worst city for Black Women's livability, Project Noir took a deep dive into the lived experiences of more than 450 Black women and girls and put rich quantitative and narrative context around the dead-last ranking.

"We really do think that there are solutions, but we need to stop looking to other regions and get creative with our own problems," said Bethany

Studenic

, co-founder and managing director of Enlightened Solutions. "We believe that if we can solve this in Cleveland, we can solve it anywhere."

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Background and more information:

[The Best and Worst Cities for Black Women - Bloomberg](#)

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[Clevelandurbannews.com](#) and [Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com](#) , the most read Black digital newspaper and Black blog in Ohio and in the Midwest.

Tel:

(216) 659-0473. Email: editor@clevelandurbannews.com. We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview

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[CLICK HERE TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM,
OHIO'S LEADER IN BLACK DIGITAL NEWS](#)