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WEBINAR

A CONVERSATION ON THE COMMISSION ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

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Remarks:

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U.S. Senate

THE HON. FREDERICA F. WILSON (D-Fla.)
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Panel:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. REEVES: Hello there. My name is Richard Reeves. I am a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution where I direct our Future of the Middle Class Initiative and I'm also director of our new project on boys and men. I'm delighted to welcome you to this event today.

It's a hugely important event we think on the creation of a new body, the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. This was a commission that was established with bipartisan legislation at the end of 2020. And it is specifically focused on the economic, social and other challenges that are faced by Black boys and men in this country. It's going to be part of the Office of Civil Rights and it's going to contain members of government as well as appointees from outside. The commission is underway and you're going to hear from the director of the commission a little bit later.

But first, we're going to have conversations with some of the really big legislative leads for this initiative. And I'm going to start with Senator Marco Rubio who has really been leading this effort on the Senate side. Following some similar work that he's actually done in Florida. And so, with that I would like to welcome Senator Rubio to the virtual Brookings stage. Senator Rubio, welcome.

MR. RUBIO: Thanks for having me. I appreciate the opportunity.

MR. REEVES: And thanks for your leadership of this work as well, senator. Given that this is a bipartisan effort on a very specific group, Black boys and men. Could you say a little bit about why that has become so important to you as a policy issue?

It seems like it has been both back at home, if you'd like, but also a national level. What is it about this specific group that you think is warranted the creation of such a commission?

MR. RUBIO: So I think that first of all, it's important to point out as you already have that when I was in the state legislature, we actually created one commission like this before, which is active and operating. And I did it with then-State Senator Frederica

Wilson who now is Congresswoman Frederica Wilson. Who was also my counterpart in the House in our creation of this last year at the federal level.

And I think there's two reasons why this is important. And the first is -- goes to the identity of our country as a nation where we believe is in our founding principles that all people are created with inherent rights to life, to liberty to the pursue happiness, to achieve success as they define it. And second, because the reality of it is that we're in a great power competition right now with China. They have three times as many people as we do. We can't afford to leave anyone behind.

So for those two reasons, it is essentially for us any time we identify any group of Americans who are facing some disproportionate amount of challenges or underperformance, be it economic, education or social, to identify why it is that that's happening and what are the possible ways to address it. And obviously, not all of that falls on the government. But just to truly understand it beyond the anecdotal, beyond the political, beyond, you know, guess work. To actually have serious people look at it on a consistent ongoing basis and define it is to me critical of being able to solve it.

The bottom line is that across every metric, African-American men and boys are underperforming the general population in terms of marriage rates, in terms of family formation, in terms of income, educational achievement and they're over represented in our law and criminal justice system. So why is that? What is the answer to it? What are the component aspects of our society that are leading to that outcome? And what could possibly be done to begin to address it?

But addressing anything begins with an awareness of it.

MR. REEVES: Right. And that's clearly going to be an important part of the commission. How important do you think it is that this is a bipartisan effort because, obviously, issue around race and racial justice can get politicized quite quickly. But this has been established under bipartisan representation and it was in Florida too.

And obviously, so that's interesting because there's a debate that can be

quite polarizing. So from your perspective, what additional value do you think comes from the fact that this has been established in this very bipartisan way?

MR. RUBIO: Well, and we need to keep it that way because the practical truth is that anything that becomes partisan in this country immediately splits our country in half. We are deeply polarized. And so, we struggle to make progress and advances and achieving on topics that are polarizing both because of the nature of our political system. The way our legislative branch, for example, is structured at the state and federal level.

And also, because societal it's hard to rally people around something that they believe it's a cause that it only matters to one side. And therefore, you have to be on the opposite side of it. So I think this is critical. This truly goes -- again, I think every American no matter how you're registered to vote or what your ideology might be.

Everyone should be concerned that there is a segment of our population that from a statistical standpoint is not achieving to their full potential for some reason. And we need to identify what those reasons are and begin to address them to the extent government can.

MR. REEVES: So as you point out, the metrics speak to some extent for themselves when you do so breaking the data down in this way. And what my colleague, Camille Busette, who is moderating -- is on a panel later has really set out this new deal for Black men in particular.

Are there issues that jump out to you particularly? So when we do that -- when you look at it in that way, we look at this very specific group, like a small group of the population if we're going to break by Black and by gender. Are there things that either initially or now really are the ones that made you sit up and think, okay. This is a very different kind of problem. This isn't just a difference of degree. This is a difference of kind in terms of the inequality space by this group. Because you're right. It's across the board. But which are the ones that really stick out to you?

MR. RUBIO: Well, let me describe it this way. Look, there are racists

unfortunately in every society in the world and that includes our own. And that certainly is always going to be a factor. There are people out there that simply don't like people that look different than them. And that's an unfortunate feature of our human nature. And obviously, our laws should not contain any of that.

But that's not the only thing. There are also I think indifference or being unaware of what life is like for other people for a lot of different reasons is a big problem. The truth of the matter is, and I continue to say it, we still have an enormous number of people in positions of authority who are not bad people. They just honestly are not aware or don't fully appreciate some of these challenges.

So just to give you a very practical example, right? Let's say, you're a young man that's African-American or Hispanic or from any background, but you go to -- . You're being raised by your grandmother because your mom is working two jobs and your dad isn't even a part of your life. You live in a dangerous neighborhood and in substandard housing. Now, you go to the public school that the government makes you go to, but in that school, you don't really have access to much of all the opportunity. You don't have anything about internships. You couldn't afford it anyway or study abroad for that matter. When the time comes to take a standardized test, you can't afford the expensive courses that people are taking. They increase their SAT or ACT scores such enough to get them into school.

So there's a whole world out there that you are not even exposed to. Look, I don't face even half of the challenges that many today face. But I didn't have any internships or study abroad opportunities but my parents couldn't afford it and the like. And then when the time comes to get into college or later on apply for a job, your resume, no matter how smart or talented you are doesn't stack up because you're competing against people that have spent years with internships and study abroad and all kinds of opportunities that you may not even be aware of. That's an impediment.

It's one of the reasons why -- one of the things I've been supportive of is school choice. Not because I'm antipublic schools. I went to public schools and I think

public schools like in South Florida where I live. Some of the best public schools in America are public schools in South Florida. But I also have seen firsthand, not because I read about it, I've seen firsthand someone be taken through an opportunity scholarship, which is funded through corporate donations to step up for kids in Florida. Be able to go to a private school or a school of their parents' choice where they are exposed to all kinds of things that expand their horizons.

Suddenly they realize there's this whole other world out there. Job and career opportunities that they may never have been aware of had their life been isolated to, you know, just the 15, 20 square blocks of their neighborhood and their local community. That is a life changing opportunity. It suddenly sparks all sorts of interests. I've seen it happen over and over again. People who never thought about becoming an engineer or a pilot or going into the service academies or going into whatever, law or science. Whatever it may be because they didn't even know that those jobs existed because they don't know anyone who has jobs like that.

To me that's extraordinarily important. And it's one of those things that I think are underappreciated. You know, how much value that has in young people's lives to be exposed to those opportunities and to expand horizons early on.

MR. REEVES: Yeah. Also, I think that's a great example, Senator Rubio. The ends and the means, if you like. If the end is to improve outcomes for Black men and boys then we can then have an argument about the means. Is that through most school choice? Is it through other kinds of investments and so on? But it becomes an argument about what works rather than kind of ideologically inflected.

MR. RUBIO: Right.

MR. REEVES: A couple of more questions just before we let you go, Senator. The first question is just about the specific focus on men and boys, okay? Which is not entirely uncontroversial in some circles.

I'm interested to know what your view is about the specific challenges for

Black boys and men might face. But by extension, perhaps other boys and men might face too as a result of being boys and men. So in other words, I think the standard narrative is we think in binaries. Men doing better than women. White people doing better than Black and Hispanic people, et cetera. But here you're cutting across that and you're saying it might be something specific about being a man, being male actually that is not to your advantage at least for some boys and men.

Do you think that's true? And can you think of examples of where it actually kind of goes the other way particularly for this group?

MR. RUBIO: Sure. I don't think anyone lives in a vacuum, right? So what impacts men ultimately impacts women. Or what impacts fathers ultimately impacts their children whether they're boys or girls. What impacts a husband ultimately impacts a wife.

And so, the reason why we're so focused on that acutely is because there are some unique aspects to the challenges that Black men and boys face in terms of like the incarceration rate. The early interaction with the criminal justice system which is stigmatizing. Yet, again I go back to this point. And so, it's complicated because it doesn't fit neatly in the box of is it racism in terms of 1960 stark racism or is it just indifference.

But so, if you're -- I'll give you a real-world example, right? So I know a 16-year-old young man. He's been around my son his whole life and lives in a challenging neighborhood. And he had an unfortunate interaction with the criminal justice system. Now, had we not gotten involved, he would have been represented in that juvenile justice system by a, you know, a public defender type individual. And he would probably have been asked to plea to some sort of an offense, which would have then, you know, become part of his record.

Had that same offense, which was not a big one, been committed by someone whose father and mother, you know, have professional salaries and tending. They would have hired a really good lawyer who once used to be a prosecutor and basically got the thing dismissed with the agreement of, you know, sealing the records and some sort of

community service.

That right there at 16, 17, 18 years of age is a major diversion point in the lives of two people. Simply because one of them could afford or knew about or had access to a different outcome than somebody else. And those circumstances seem to be more acute and chronic, by the way, in African American boys and men than in the population in general. And it has a direct impact ultimately on the wellbeing of women. Be they their daughters, their wives, their partners and spouses.

And so, you know, that's why we chose to focus on it that way. Obviously, it's model after what we did in Florida and it has been highly successful. And frankly, some of the biggest orders of this effort have been African American women leaders in the community. To the points of this, I would point to something Frederica Wilson started with 5,000 role models. It used to be 500 role models of excellence in South Florida, which seeks to partner young Hispanic and African-American males with role model figures in the community that look like them, come from where they came from and have achieved success as a way of saying, you can be anything in the world you want to be and here's how to get there.

MR. REEVES: Thank you. My last question to you, Senator, is about what success looks like? So you've already, I think, got started going down this road. I also think, by the way, that example of criminal justice is a great example of how you have a specific -- a problem specific to Black boys and men or disproportionately affecting them, but has spillover effects for everybody else. As you say, we don't live in a vacuum.

I was going to ask you what success would look like for the commission? But let's be a bit more ambitious and say, what would success look like more broadly for this issue? What's the world look like? The commission is helping to kind of point us towards? How will we know? When will you wake up and feel like, okay, we've really made some progress on this issue?

MR. RUBIO: So let me give you a real-world example again. Another

young man that has been -- that we've known since he's like eight or nine years of age when my son and I -- my son and he had been playing together in the same sports teams and parks and so forth since they were eight or nine years old and now both are close to 17 years of age.

This young man in my opinion is a genius. Unfortunately, he's to this point in his life, used that genius for things like counterfeiting and, you know, drug sales and, you know, illegality. But it didn't have to be that way. And it doesn't have to be that way. And he has some unique aspects of his background.

He lives, again, in a very tough neighborhood, which he wishes he didn't have to go to every night. His brother was killed a few years ago by a group that killed him because happens to live two blocks away in a different building. That is what the fight is over. And now, he's been a consistent target.

He's a big strong kid, which makes him an even bigger target. And he sort of turned to this behavior both because he sees it as the most immediate and effective application of his genius and ambition. He has ambition and he has ability, but the only horizon he sees before him that fits within the paradigm of where he lives is that one.

Success looks like him instead not just living in a better and safer neighborhood, but being in an academic and educational and social environment where he has the opportunity to apply that genius to something productive not destructive. And that's a hard thing to do, but we have to do it. And because if we don't then this what I believe is a genius young man, his gifts, his talents will be stolen from the country.

Not to mention just the personal tragedy but, you know, the country will be deprived of the unique skills and talents of an individual who is an American. And we just can't afford it in this time in our history. We need everyone. We can't afford to leave anyone behind.

MR. REEVES: I really like the way you've ended there on what we would call an asset. And asset model rather than a deficit model, Senator. Of saying that theirs is

a reservoir of talent here which can sometimes be misdirected, but which we need to tap into. And it's very often being left on the table as you said at the beginning. Well, with that, Senator, I'm going to let you go. Thank you very much for your leadership of this work. And thank you for your time today.

MR. RUBIO: Well, thank you for bringing attention to it. I appreciate it.

MR. RAY: So I want to thank, Senator Rubio for those remarks and to Richard Reeves and his colleagues in economic studies for their hard work on this event.

I'm Dr. Rashawn Ray. I'm a Senior Fellow in Governance Studies here at the Brookings Institution. It is my distinct pleasure now to introduce Congresswoman Frederica Wilson who represents Florida's 24th Congressional District. You heard Senator Rubio referencing her a few times during his remarks.

And I just want to take a quick minute to highlight some of the work that she's done over the years that really speaks to getting to this point because she's been one of the primary drivers on this type of work. Not only can we think about Miami, Dade County and that particular area and Broward County as well being one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse.

But also, we can recognize Congresswoman Wilson for the work that she's done serving in the U.S. House of Representatives after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Fisk University. Going to my home state of Tennessee. And then a Master of Science degree science degree in elementary education from the University of Miami where she's originally from.

She started being a teacher and then became a principal. And then quickly rose up the ranks to being recognized as one of President George H.W. Bush's America 2000 in terms of thinking about the plan for upgrading national education standards. As a former educator, an elementary school teacher, a community leader, school board member, state legislature and founder of the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence project. Congresswoman Wilson earned a reputation as "the voice for voices."

As a ranking member in the education and workforce protection subcommittee, she's done tons of work including focusing on the American Jobs Act, the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, the Youth Corps Act of 2013. And then also focusing on a host of things that we know are pertinent to Americans from dealing with homeowners, insurance premium, crime prevention and violence, foster care and then even defending women in Haiti and Nigeria from gender-based violence.

And then quite relevant to our discussion here is that in May 2015, Congresswoman Wilson was appointed to the Advisory Council of then President Barack Obama's My Brother's Keeper Alliance which was a public acknowledgement of the lifechanging results for boys and young men of color that she's received from her work on the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project.

President Barack Obama cited her program as being the impetus for thinking about My Brother's Keeper and then of course Congresswoman Wilson went on to be the founding chair of the Congressional Black Caucuses My Brother's Keeper taskforce. It is my pleasure to introduce Congresswoman Wilson who will give us some remarks now.

MS. WILSON: Thank you so much, Rashawn. What a wonderful introduction. Thank you. I appreciate it so much.

I want to say good evening, good afternoon, good morning and hello to everyone here. I'm Congresswoman Frederica Wilson. I'm the founder and also the chair of the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. And you need to know that we have declared the year 2022, 2023 as the year of Black men and boys.

And we want the Brookings Institute -- and I know that the Brookings people are all here. And I want Mr. Richard, for sure, Mr. Richard Reeves to help us amplify that message.

I am the founder of -- and I guess the number one volunteer for the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project. It's a dropout prevention program that I founded in Miami, Dade County public schools 30 years ago. I really founded it at my little elementary

school. And when I was elected to the school board, I put it in all of the schools in Miami, Dade County.

So thousands of men mentor young boys all over Florida during the school day from third grade to 12th grade. And then we actually send them to college or we send them to the military or we support them in the next level of life. In turn, they return back to Miami, back to Florida. All over Florida and they are mentors themselves in the school district. The oldest is probably 55 years old. And our goal has always been to interrupt the school to prison pipeline.

I want to thank the Brookings Institution and all who have chosen to participate in today's conversation for your commitment to improving the life outcomes of Black males in America. I want to thank my dear friend, Senator Marco Rubio, for his remarks today and his support in the Senate to pass this transformative Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys.

Mr. Rubio serves as mentor in the role models. And Senator Scott also helps with this initiative in the state of Florida. For several years prior to the passing, I fought in Congress to establish the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. But before even coming to Congress, in Florida I passed the Florida Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. And it is currently very much alive and well.

In fact, my son, my personal son, because I have so many all over the United States, but my blood son serves on the commission in Florida and they do work all over Florida.

You know, when we passed the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. When it was actually voted upon, they were ushering Congressman John Lewis' body into the Capitol for viewing. And he was one of the fiercest advocates of Black Men and Boys. Congressman John Lewis and I attended Fisk University together. So we have been friends -- we were friends for generations. And I'm just sadden that he was not aware that it was passed. But I know that he is beaming with pride that this commission, the first policy

passed by Congress to specifically address Black men and boys is working to study the various issues impacting Black men and boys.

And we're going to provide policy recommendations to members of the Congressional Black Caucus to file as bills to improve the lives of America's Black males. We can hardly wait to go to work.

It is no secret that being Black and male in America is not easy. And when I founded the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence. Little girls would say to me, Mrs. Wilson, you're always doing something for the boys. When are you going to do something for the girls? I would say to them, you may think that this is for the boys, but this is for you. I am building you good, strong husbands and good, strong fathers for your children.

So when they see me now in Miami and Jacksonville, in Orlando, all over Florida, they say, Ms. Wilson, my boyfriend is a member of the 5,000 Role Models of Excellence and he's going to college thanks to you.

Despite historic gains made in the last 50 years, Black males across the United States and from all walks of life face significant conditions and challenges in life's biggest areas. Number one, education. And I guess education and criminal justice would be tied. Healthcare, employment, fatherhood, mentorship and violence. And perhaps the most dangerous issue facing Black men and boys in America is racism itself.

When a little baby is born, the doctor brings the baby to the mother and says, Ms. Wilson, it's a boy. And places that baby on the mother's breast. He doesn't say, Mrs. Wilson, it's a murderer. Mrs. Wilson, it's a robber. Mrs. Wilson, it's a gang member. He says, Mrs. Wilson, it's a boy. So what happens that little beautiful Black baby boy? From birth to age 13 sometimes 12 and 14 who have the courage to pick up a gun and reign terror in their community.

It doesn't have to be. We can stop that. And we have solutions. And this is the role of this commission to raise up these little Black boys so that they can become good men in society and not a menace to society. Too often, Black boys are perceived as

criminals by young age. In contrast to their white counterparts, they are labeled as the delinquents, not rowdy. They are perceived as harden criminals, not misguided youth.

The very existence of Black males is far too often seen as a threat. And unfortunately, Black men and boys have been subjected to poor, unjust treatment as a result. When a car drives up to a corner and a Black boy is there, people begin to lock the car doors. When you are approaching a Black boy on a sidewalk, many people cross the street. When a young Black boy gets on an elevator some people actually get off.

The outcomes of this treatment are reflected in the social outcomes of areas like education, criminal justice and employment. And the statistics speak for themselves. More than one out of every six Black men who today should be between 25 and 54 years old have disappeared from daily life. They're either dead, in prison, in jail. So many have been wounded in gun fights. They're disabled in nursing homes.

And the healthcare disparities. Some are in nursing homes that you would think only the elderly would be suffering like this. Low rates of high school retention among Black male students directly relate to the high rates of joblessness and incarceration. Or should I say high rates of high school, high rates of in school detention and low rates of high school retention.

More than two-thirds of Black male dropouts end up serving time in state or federal prison. And while Black males overall make up roughly 13 percent of the U.S. population, they represent nearly 30 percent of all men serving time in state and federal prisons. And that’s a shame. And we must remember who that Black man is. Black men played such an integral role of establishing our nation’s Capitol.

And every time I walk across the street from my office building, I look up at the steeple on the top of the Capitol. And I remind myself that Black men, Black slaves built the Capitol. They didn’t have cranes the way we have today. They didn’t have tall ladders like they had. They didn’t have that. They had ladders, but they weren’t as tall as the steeple. So Black slave males at the top of the ladder had to form human ladders. And they

would fall to their death.

And at the end of the day, they would dig a mass grave and put the Black men who fell to their death in it. And then they would go back to another plantation and get a new work crew for the next day. No explanation to the wife or to the spouse or to the children. Just daddy never came back home. Black men built the White House.

And the other day, I had the opportunity to visit with the president of the United States. And I told him this very same saga. And we want him involved in this commission. We want him involved because we need to amplify that this commission actually exists. That this commission is working for a solution that impacts every black family in America because every Black family in America has a Black boy, a Black man, a Black nephew, a Black uncle, a Black father, a Black son, a Black brother who is embroiled in some manner with the criminal justice system.

I have two little cousins. They're not little anymore that are in and out of jail. And I didn't know about it because the family kept it from me for a while. But I know that every single member of the African American community, every family is faced with this issue.

So what do we do because of that? We can't just let this continue. We have to find solutions. My next-door neighbor is a rabbi. And we have conversations all of the time. And he knows what I do. He knows my passion and he has said to me so many times. Congresswoman, if this were little Jewish boys, oh, no way. We would have found a solution and the federal government would be all in it. So that is the role of the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys and the Brookings Institute.

And, Rashawn, you're going to be right in the middle of it. Right with Mr. Reeves as we find the solutions. And you are our partners from this point on. And that is why the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys is so necessary. Since its establishment, the commission has held two public meetings. And I'm honored to have been voted as chair and the Reverend Al Sharpton as secretary. We only have two officers.

So the commissioners voted us as chair and secretary. The issue of Black men and boys is not partisan. We had so many members of the Senate to sign on to the bill in the Senate. And the bill passed after the murder of George Floyd. So I think the entire nation had a connection to that horrendous murder. And people's hearts began to pump and say, what can we do? So that's we give -- I give honor to George Floyd because his murder was the impetus for this bill to pass.

And I don't care if you're a Democrat, Republican, Independent or undecided. You know, what is happening with Black men and boys. Black males are dying every day in our communities, and we should all be concerned with the alarming issues that disproportionately affect them. With the commission now in place, advocates of Black men and boys like yourselves can work with us as we conduct the critical work of studying the societal forces that have disproportionately impacted Black males in America with the intent to make recommendations to address them.

And we have five members of the Congressional Black Caucus on the commission who can turn your recommendations into actual policy and bills and advocate for them in the House and the Senate and put them into law. That is what we plan to do as a commission.

And this commission's founding and with us amplifying it today and hopefully the White House amplifying it, this country will receive the attention, respect and long overdue support that they deserve, these Black men deserve to make it in America. Hopefully our amplification and working together will help every Black family in America because this issue impacts every single Black family in America.

So today, I look forward to hearing from the esteemed group of panelists and one of them serves on the commission, Dr. Marshall. I'm so proud of him. And our very own commission program manager, Dr. Marvin Williams, who is new to this job and has been doing an amazing job. We're so proud that Commissioner Marshall and Marvin Williams will be speaking today.

I hope our conversation and the questions received from the public will help shed light on the issue we as a commission should work to examine and to uplift and to pass legislation. I want to thank all of you and especially the Brookings Institute. I am so proud and so pleased to be partnering with you. I know your history and it's phenomenal. Thank you once again to everyone for being here today and having the willingness to learn and do more for America's Black men and boys. Thank you so much. And I yield back.

MR. RAY: Representative Wilson, thank you. Thank you so much for those remarks. I think the way that you framed the discussion about what the disparities are. And then what some of the avenues we can take to do what Richard was saying earlier kind of build an asset model of policies that advance some of these issues is exactly what we're trying to do here at Brookings and we know that you all doing on the commission.

What I want to do now is just take a few minutes to quickly introduce our panelists. And just continue the conversation. I'm joined by an esteemed group of panelists that you heard from Congresswoman Wilson. First, Dr. Camille Busette who's a senior fellow here at the Brookings institution. She also directs the Race, Prosperity, and Inclusion Initiative that does a lot of work on this particular topic. And you'll be hearing about some of the work that she has been doing specifically on Black boys and men.

Dr. Joseph Marshall who is the founder and executive director of Alive & Free. And also, as you heard on the commission on behalf of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Mr. Ian Rowe who is a senior fellow in Domestic Policy Studies at AEI. And also, a founder and CEO of Vertex Partnership Academies. He holds an MBA from Harvard. And last and definitely not least who we'll hear from first is Dr. Marvin Williams who is the program manager for the Commission on the Social Status of Black Boys and Men.

What I want to do now is I just want to give you all a broad question. And then hopefully, you all can answer this question within a few minutes. And then we get into some specifics. Now, we know that the commission is tasked with investigating the disparities of Black boys and men experience in education, criminal justice, health,

employment, fatherhood, mentorship and violence. And then making recommendations on how to improve the social conditions that underlie these issues.

These are some big and broad issues. As people are hearing about all of these different outcomes, why do you think the commission is important? And what should be a primary and central focus area to address at least initially in terms of thinking about what's happening with the commission? So Dr. Williams, I'll start with you. And then we'll work our way around.

MR. WILLIAMS: Excellent question, Rashawn. I don't even know how you had me go behind Senator Rubio and Chair Wilson. Somehow, I don't feel as though that's really fair, but I'm going to do my best here to follow both of them.

But excellent. I just want to say in preparatory comments, you know, nothing happens for a reason. You know, as I heard Chair Wilson talk about, you know, Congressman John Lewis. I interned with him for two years and that was a pivotal period. You know, at the time he was a young Congressman. You know, really, really making his way through Congress and the impact that he has had on my life is tremendous. Really, really tremendous. And I am just honored, you know, that director of staff, Marrow Morales (phonetic), you know, hired me into this position. You know, and here I am today to kind of talk about your very great question.

The first thing I want to say. This commission not only has a national scale, it has a global scale. As you can see what's happening in Europe and even in Ukraine. And you hear what's happening throughout the world, happened in Venezuela, Central America, South America regarding Black men and Black boys. This is not just a national issue. We are actually leading a global front.

And I believe that's why it's so critical for us to do this well and for us to do this right because I believe it's going to have an impact. It's going to have the ripple effects are going to actually go throughout the world in what we're doing here in the U.S. And this is as you already heard.

It's a nonpartisan federal agency. And the commission leads, this commission leads in a national discussion to address the complexity and nuances of the varying conditions affecting Black males in the history of America's cultural landscape.

In doing so, we want to conduct a systematic study of the conditions affecting Black men and boys including homicide rates, arresting and incarceration rates, poverty, violence, all the (inaudible) mentioned. Mentorship, drug abuse, death rates, desperate income and wealth levels, school performance and all grade levels including post-secondary education and college. And as Chair Wilson mentioned, health issues.

You know, so we want to really examine. We want to examine, you know, the trends. And you heard Chair Wilson talk about legislation. We want to examine the trends regarding Black males and report on the community impacts of relevant government programs that you kind of heard Senator Rubio talk about a little bit there within the scope of these topics.

So and proposing these measures is critical because we want to alleviate and remedy the underlining causes of the conditions described in the statute which may include recommendations of changes to the law, recommendations for how to implement related policies and recommendations for how to create, develop and improve upon government programs.

So as you said so well, it's broad, very, very broad, but we want to narrow down. You know, not only short-term but long term. You know, one of the things that we're going to be discussing in our upcoming meetings is talking about a long-term strategy, you know, for the commission. What that means in long term. You know, taking advantage of what Chair Wilson mentioned so well. These partnerships that we requiring throughout our country.

You know, because we are in partnership because it is an American issue. It is not African American or a Black issue that we're talking about. This is fundamentally an American issue. And it starts -- it started all the way from slavery and it's pushed onto where

we are now. And so, this is our time. This is our moment to make concerted change in our country for Black men and boys across the board in every segment of where you find disparity in our institutions, in our law enforcement. In every segment of society that's what this commission endeavors to do.

MR. RAY: Yeah. Thanks for that. Camille, in thinking about the importance of a commission and the short- and long-term potential avenues. What are your thoughts on this in terms of the importance of the commission and maybe where some of the foci should be either initially or long term?

MS. BUSETTE: Sure. Thank you, Rashawn. And thank you for having me in this very important conversation. It's really humbling to go after Senator Rubio and Representative Wilson as well as Dr. Williams.

What I will say is that the commission is going to be extremely important to transforming this nation. It's going to be very important that a commission with the kind of bully pulpit that it actually has be able to release data and solutions and leverage that national platform to ensure that the kinds of approaches, programs, policies, et cetera, that are recommended are understood by all Americans as benefiting all of us.

And in addition, as Dr. Williams has already said, this does have global ramifications. You know, the U.S. is not the only place that is struggling with the position of men and boys of color. We held an event last Spring where we talked about this and in its relevance to France, which is an area, you know, a country that has struggled with this issue as well. So I think there are a lot of global implications. And we will be a reference point for other countries.

So I would say is, you know, that the most important part of the exercise here is not only the data collection but also the generation of solutions. And the kind of -- the sort of problems we're talking about, you know, that were mapped out there by Dr. Williams are problems that are very large scale. And up to this point, the kinds of solutions that we've been having are small scale solutions.

They are programs, you know, well-intentioned. Some of them are successful, some of them are not like mentorship, et cetera. But when we're talking about, you know, tens of millions of people, right, you have to have a solution that is commensurate with that scale. And that is why it's really, really important for Congress to follow through on the recommendations, whatever they may be because Congress and, you know, federal government is really the only place where you can get that kind of scale. And therefore, that kind of transformation. So I would say that's going to be really important.

The second thing is one of the things that I think really should be an anchor for this commission is what does it mean to experience wellbeing? When you are an American Black boy or Black man? And when we think about wellbeing generally when we have that conversation in the U.S., we're thinking about health status and mental health status, but it's always -- the reference point is always white people.

And so, what we need to do is figure out what's that definition of wellbeing that is defined by us for us about us. And what does that mean? And I think that that is going to be an important place for the commission to anchor its recommendations, whatever those might be. So I do think that there are a lot opportunities here to be pretty pioneering and to be transformative and to really leverage the power of the federal government to address the scale of the issues that we just talked about.

MR. RAY: Yeah. Thanks, Camille. I want to bring Ian into this conversation. So, Ian, thinking about what you've heard and thinking about, of course, these broad scale type of issues to be addressed which are many. And then thinking about what are some of the policy solutions that Camille is doing. Pushing us to really do a size fit there between the issues and the potential solutions. Where do you fall on this? And what do you see should be some of the main, at least, initial primary pathways for the commission?

MR. ROWE: Well, first of all, thank you for the invitation to be part of this incredibly important conversation and commission. As you mentioned, I am a senior fellow

at the American Enterprise Institute.

But for the purposes of this conversation, I think the fact that for the last 10 years, I ran a network of public charter schools in the heart of the South Bronx in the Lower East Side of Manhattan is very relevant. You know, because we had 2,000 students, almost all Black and Hispanic students. Almost all low income. And we had nearly 5,000 families on the wait list, you know, desperate for the opportunity to send their child to a great school.

You just start to realize that many of the families that were coming to us, their aspiration for their children even if they face discrimination in their own lives was to have their kid have a great shot. In this particular district in the South Bronx, only two percent of kids that started nineth grade in 2015, four years later graduated from high school ready for college.

So when we talk about disparities, we have to really think a lot about how could we start much earlier. Because it's not surprising that we had disparities in wealth and all these other outcomes as adults when we see such poor outcomes coming out of K-12. It's one of the reasons I'm actually now launching a new network of international baccalaureate at high schools in the South Bronx starting this Fall.

And I think the thing that this commission should really think about is as much as we look at all of the dire statistics, our families want their kids to understand the strategies that they actually have that will allow them to pursue the American dream and be successful. How do we replicate success?

So for example, there was a study a few years ago. Black men making in America that found that nearly 60 percent of Black men have made it to the middle class or higher. That was in, you know, 60 percent which was an increase from 38 percent in 1960. So the question is why? What were the factors that drove that level of economic success? Is it just random? Were there any elements that contributed to that wide scale success?

And I think often times when we talk about conditions facing Black men, it's very easy to descend into a defeatist narrative. While we have to address that, we also

need to look at and recognize the success. And in this particular study, there were a few elements that were in common.

The vast majority had finished at least their high school degree and had some post-secondary success. Full time work just that they learned the dignity and discipline of work. If they had had children, marriage first. Another element was a strong faith commitment. You know, we haven't talked a lot about the role of the church and faith. Not all of the solutions that we talk about will be policy based.

There will have to be faith-based and cultural-based as well. There's an element of the military. But one of the things that was most interesting about this study, you know, Black men making it in America was that there was a sense of personal agency. That these men had a sense that even in the face of these structural barriers, they had the ability to overcome.

And so, it's just an interesting way that we have to incorporate the study of success in the large populations of Black men that have succeeded while we're also looking at, you know, a lot of the negative narratives that we often focus on.

MR. RAY: You know, Ian, that's a great point. I mean thinking about the models of success become really, really important. And it's very easy to get caught up in some of, as you noted, some of the deleterious outcomes. But there are different ways to frame that. A deficit versus an asset-based model and that's kind of a theme that we've been hearing about.

Dr. Marshall, I want to bring you into this conversation. And I want to go bigger and then bring us back down because essentially what's been highlighted over the past few comments really speaks to a big debate in the academic literature and policy and in public discourse about the role of structure versus culture.

On one hand, research makes it very clear the structural barriers that exists for Black men that others do not face. On the other hand, there are ongoing cultural wars about the individual responsibility that Black men should assume. And this is often where

crime, violence and policing come into play. And of course, we know this is just one of your areas of expertise.

Now, we know that Black boys and men experience a disproportionate amount of police use of force. However, we also know that violent crime is an issue in some predominantly Black and particularly low-income communities, which often times are not mutually exclusive. And that's important to note that as well.

But where do you fall in this debate? And how can the commission properly address it? Because one thing that I can see is with the 19-member commission there are people coming with all different advantage points, different levels of expertise. You're trying to hone in on some policy solutions, but really the big -- one of the big elephants in the room is just difference in ideological approaches to what Black men should be doing.

MR. MARSHALL: Well, that's a good question. I'll do my best to answer. First of all, I've got to just thank, you know, Speaker Pelosi for putting me on this commission. She could have picked anybody, but she picked me. And I think one of the reasons I'm a direct service person.

First of all, I'm a Black male. All I do is I work with Black men and boys. You know, I tried to frame this in a way that tries to make sense to a lot of people. In this country, Black men and boys have always been from day one swimming against the current. The current always flows against us, right?

Some of us has just become good swimmers for a lot of reasons. I learned how to swim in the current. You learn how to swim in the current. Marvin has learned to swim in the current. A lot of them are drying because they never learned how to swim in this current that goes against them. And I think individually I've tried to help the young men learn how to swim even though the current is going against them. And I think this is a chance on this commission on a large basis to do that.

We're talking about policy earlier just before I get to the other point. Policies in many ways that help to exacerbate the current. You know, the policies in the War on

Drugs. You know, the mandatory minimum sentencing that hundred-to-one crack cocaine disparities. Also, I'll help to create and continue this current. And at the same time, I'm a big believer that, you know, a lot of Black men and women are including our own impression. They do that. They just don't know.

I have a saying with my young people and old folks. If you knew what I knew, you wouldn't do what you do. And so, I'm big on history. I'm big on culture. I'm getting them a big, you know, to see the larger picture. I'm big on getting to see how they unwillingly and unknowingly contribute to the detriment of their own community. It's not a debate. It's not an either/or. It's the whole fan. All of that is involved in that. And I myself as an individual when I learned early about the big picture, it helped me to frame my work. You know, reading the autobiography of Malcolm X when I was a very young person, helped me to see all that was going on here and how I fit unwillingly and unknowingly just make it worse for my own.

And so, yeah, I don't see it as a debate. I see it as part of all that has to be done. I'm a big believer in education. I have ideas about what works here and this is what I bring to the commission. Now, we can frame that in a policy piece. I think that's very excellent. But I think we've got some pretty good ideas about what works and what needs to be done. So I don't see that as a debate. I see it as both things need to be done. And we will. We'll make sure that -- and my job is to make sure that we do not unwillingly continue to contribute to that current moving downstream and drag us down into it also.

MR. RAY: You know, that's a very profound analogy to think about the current and teaching people how to swim. And learning how to swim in stronger waters. And always think about what is the source of the current? What is the source that leads to the current being different?

And often time, we focus on the good swimmers instead of realizing that maybe it's important that it's okay to have average swimmers. We just need to ensure that they can actually swim in the same waters that everyone else is swimming in. It's kind of

similar to the crabs in the barrel mentality. People always talk about crabs in the barrel, but nobody ever thinks that the barrel isn't actually the natural habitat of where the crabs are located. Nobody thinks to remove the actual barrel.

And accordingly, when we think about this, we think about family being one of the primary sources by which people learn how to swim in the current or be in the barrel. And though research shows that Black men relative to other groups are more likely to engage in caregiving activities regarding bathing and quality of time with children. And often times, people don't realize that's the case. Be we also know that Black men are much more likely to have nonmarital births. And we heard Ian mention this a second ago.

Ian, I'm going to quickly bring you back in. We received a range of questions about how existing laws and legislations concerning certain government benefits for mothers and children might actually inhibit Black men from living in a home. And I think really what people were getting at wasn't just thinking about child support and those sort of things which was a big deal. But also, the type of government benefits that are available particularly for young families and young mothers. What are your thoughts on this? And how can the commission potentially address it?

MR. ROWE: Yeah. I mean where you have situations where policy actually creates perverse incentives to deter things like marriage or work or sometimes creates perverse, you know, incentives for nonmarital childbearing, I hope the commission dives deep into this area because, frankly, it's an area of huge importance.

And one thing I should say because often times when we talk about nonmarital childbearing, we pathologize the Black community and not recognizing that the explosion of nonmarital childbirth is now across the board. It's what I call an equal opportunity tsunami. So the growth in nonmarital births in the white community is far greater than it has been even in the Black community. Even though, again percentage wise, you know, 70 percent of Black children are still born outside of wedlock.

That said, the nonmarital birthrate in the white community is at a level now

where the raw numbers far exceed any other category. And you're starting to see the negative impacts of that when you look at deaths of despair, suicides, poverty, opioid abuse. So we should recognize that these issues that we're talking about are not solely focused within the Black community because we don't want there to become this stereotype or perpetuate stereotypes that often follow in this kind of argument.

The role of family though is fundamental. We just cannot deny the fact that if you look at the poverty rate in Black married families, for example, it's single digits and it has been for decades. And so, the role of marriage, the role of family, folks often look at, for example, the racial wealth gap. If you look at the 2019 survey of consumer finances. If you look solely just based on race, the wealth of the average white family is about $160,000 more than that of the average Black family. And for some that's proof of America's history of racial oppression.

But if you just take into account two other factors, family structure and education, the average married, college-educated Black family's wealth is about $220,000, which is about almost equally a $160,000 more than that of the average white single parent family. So that $160,000 wealth gap is literally almost reversed. And so, all that says is that there are factors beyond race that can drive outcomes. And we just need to be part of the conversation.

There's no silver bullet that just say, just get married and everything will be okay. But we can't ignore the fact that the raw numbers tell us that family structure is a significant determinant of economics, education and a whole host of other outcomes that we care about.

MR. RAY: You know, Ian, we really appreciate those comparisons. And as you noted, often times people aren't making apples to apples comparisons. So it becomes important to do that. To think about what is it when we look at two parent households that are Black and educated versus whites? And think about those gaps there.

Camille, I want to bring you in because -- and we're going to scale back up

to talking about education and wealth. So just to tell people where we're going. And I'm going to get Dr. Williams back in as well.

We heard Senator Rubio shortly ago speaking to social networks and mentorship. I mean we also heard this from Congresswoman Wilson and their great work. You've done a lot of work including Richard Reeves and others showing the role of social networks and how they hamper the work opportunities for Black men relative to other groups. Can you share some of your main findings and how the commission might address these important gaps in social networks which seems to span how we think about everything from role models, education and work at the top of kind of the social economic hierarchy all the way down to the bottom?

MS. BUSETTE: Yeah. Absolutely, Rashawn. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk about that.

I first wanted to say that the research we did we did in four different cities, Charlotte, San Francisco, Racine, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. And we interviewed people from all, you know, walks of life and all demographics. And what we found from that very extensive set of interviews about how you look for a job? How you find educational opportunities? And how you find housing opportunities?

Is that in every single one of those cases, in those cities, Black men were at a disadvantage relative to everybody else with respect to the number of people in their networks for finding these kinds of opportunities and the strength of those networks. And so, what was really kind of revealing -- first of all, so we had a hard time recruiting Black men in each of these studies.

One might expect that to be true in San Francisco where there are just not a lot of Black men, but we had that problem in Charlotte and we had that in Washington, D.C. And largely because Black men tend not to be very well networked. They on average have one person that they turn to for all of these opportunities. So what that said to us is that even if we were to create a situation where there are just lots and lots of opportunities like

we supposedly have right now, right, in the sort of economic recovery. That Black men are not really able to access the networks that allow them to take advantage of those opportunities.

We also found in this study, and this is probably as disturbing, is that the networks associated with those kinds of opportunities are highly racialized in the U.S. And so, we would not be, you know, we're obviously not surprised by that. But what that means is that the resources and information about jobs, educational opportunities, housing opportunities, et cetera, actually those resources and information circulate within racial groups as opposed to between racial groups.

So you combine that with the sort of social network relative to these kinds of opportunities. I'm not talking about, you know, people you hang out with, but I'm talking, you know, in terms of getting these kinds of opportunities. You combine that to racialized network with the sort of opportunity isolation of Black men, you're talking about a really, really kind of a constrained set of options to move ahead and to be part of the mainstream of the economy.

When we looked at the reasons behind this finding, we looked -- we went kind of all the way back and we looked at, you know, the ways in which Black boys, in particular, are isolated and stigmatized from a very early age. And pulled out of school and other kinds of systems that allow them where they would normally form these kinds of networks.

And so, there's a lot to be said about the downstream sort of what's happening from preschool all the way up that makes it very difficult for Black boys who later turn into Black men to have the kinds of robust networks that are necessary to access opportunities. So lots for the commission to think about and to strategize about in that space as well.

MR. RAY: Yeah. Most definitely. I want to try to combine a question that I want to give to members of the commission now to bring you all back in. And then I think

hopefully, we'll be able to do a quick round robin of some final thoughts.

So we just heard some discussions about education and work. But of course, one of the big ones that was linked, and Ian brought this up, is dealing with wealth. We received a series of questions essentially stating that a piecemeal policy approach doesn't go far enough to address the elephant in the room, which is systemic racism. That kind of don't matter what Black people do, they're swimming against the current. And then all of a sudden, they're being viewed as the tokens for swimming better in worse waters.

And so, people say that the systemic racism is what should be addressed. And of course, one big thing that has been gaining momentum is thinking about reparations. And we received a series of questions about that. And I'm curious kind of where the commission falls on that? And how the commission thinks about education as well as trying to figure out a way to use it as a gateway for more wealth creation. So we'll start with Dr. Williams and then we'll go to Dr. Marshall.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I will say Chair Wilson probably is the best person to kind of talk about reparations. As you know, she had a conference. I actually should say, a press conference a while back that she did talk about reparations. That has not come to the commission as of yet. And it maybe Dr. Marshall would like to say something more about that.

But at this point, in my arena in terms of planning, program planning, that has not come, you know, to the commission. But I will say education is. That is at the top tier of the commission's priorities within the commission framework. Addressing the areas of education across the board. Not just very, very specific but across the board.

You know, as somebody already mentioned. You know, going back to that, you know, it doesn't just start at high school. You know, when you get to secondary education, it starts well before that. You know, elementary school where, you know, that Black boy has learned what ostracism really is. You know, and then he takes that ostracism that has been cast upon him by his teachers or by his colleagues and so forth. And he takes

that into high school and that's where a secondary education best would rub it. And then all of a sudden, you know, now that person is a statistic, you know, in talking about that one million men, Black men and boys, that are missing from society.

So education is key. It really, really is key. I think it's going to be fundamental. That's just my perspective. I think it's going to be fundamental for moving forward. I think that education training is going to have to be driven. You know, we're talking about upstream. I really believe, you know, that education priority is going to be the one that's going to help people paddle. You know, help people swim upstream against the stream, against all odds, to be able to turn that around significantly.

MR. RAY: Yeah. I mean yes. Dr. Marshall, go ahead with your thoughts on this question.

MR. MARSHALL: Well, reparations? That's interesting. I'm still waiting on the 40 acres and a mule so. And I'm serious about that. You know, because that goes back to reconstruction. You know, I'm thinking about going -- because I give you all a history lesson. I think everybody here knows. I mean look I'm talking about --

MR. RAY: But yeah, a lot of people don't know. But yeah, you're right. It's important. Sometimes people don't know.

MR. MARSHALL: Wealth disparity, I think is created by all of this stuff and it has happened, you know, since the three-fifth compromise, okay?

I don't know if reparation is going to happen. I'll take anything you give. If you want to do it, great. I'll take it. It can't hurt. Whether it will happen, we'll see. I know that certain cities have addressed it. They are actually addressing it right here in the city of San Francisco. And as for other cities, they have addressed reparations in their particular city.

And I think this shows all the issues that are involved here. I mean we've gone all over the place because all of these impact the status, historically and now, of Black men and boys. So we'll see what happens with that. I don't know if this commission is

taking it up. I'm sure it will come up as we move forward, but you can see which has a lot of things. Privately, people are going to say, you're crazy for taking it on in the first place. But we have to.

Education? Huge. Education is huge. I mean and there's no doubt of it. Each of us are here today. Look at this. Because education has helped us get here, right? It has helped us swim against that stream. And so, I always say two things. Now, I'm like this. People ask me what can I do? What can I do? What can I do? And I say, you can help Black men and boys become better swimmers against this current. And the other thing you can do is change the direction of the current so that we don't have to swim so hard.

Those are the two things that I tell people all the time. And that's exactly what I tell my young men pretty much the same thing. Reparations is part of changing that current. Whether that happens all of these things need to be done to change this current. If, in fact, we really want to do something.

But this commission, you can see is charged with a huge job. I have no doubt that we will do the best we can to craft some policies that cut into this disparity.

MR. RAY: Yeah. Great point. What I want to do now because we are pretty much out of time. And I'm going to give you all a big task in a short amount of time. I essentially need a few seconds here, a few sentences, and nothing more.

And being realistic thinking about the work that this commission is tasked with and how long it is going to take for it to kind of change the tide and do the sort of things that we're talking about. Getting more people can swim faster and better, these sort of things. I like that particular analogy.

Let's do a round robin. In 20 years, what do you hope the commission has accomplished? And what will be that proof? So let me start with Camille. I'll go to Ian. I'll go to Joseph and then end with Martin.

MS. BUSETTE: So in 20 years, I want boys like my son to be able to reach whatever their aspirations are without any interference whatsoever.

I do think it's going to be important for the commission to focus on education, but in the following way. Not to leave it to individual school districts who will water down and whittle down any sort of impactful solution. But to take an idea like reparations and figure out how you can apply it so that Black boys and Black men can get their just rewards within the educational system.

MR. RAY: Yeah. And go, Ian.

MR. ROWE: I will of course go. Thank you again. You know, I hope that the commission recognizes both the structural barriers and the individual power that exists. And that there are institutions like family, faith, education and then work that really matter.

And that it shouldn't be the situation that right now, for example, in New York City. If you're in a district in the Bronx and you had a great idea to launch a school that would educate Black boys, you couldn't do it. That's one of the ways we ease the tide and change the current. Let's ensure every kid of every race has the power to choose a great school for their child. That's one of the biggest currents fighting against our kids today.

MR. RAY: Yeah. Most definitely. Joseph?

MR. MARSHALL: Well, it took 400 years to get this way so if you expect it in 10 years or if we're ever going to do this. I think we can make significant progress because this is specifically focused on it. I think you've got some great people involved. The fact that this is bipartisan is certainly going to help.

Let me just add this thing about education. It's not just education and schools per se. It is what is taught in those schools. What is taught in those schools. And the truth is not being taught in school.

And until we -- as we, you know, if you really want to improve educational outcomes so you've got to teach the truth to young people about Black history, about Black culture. I think that's significantly important because just putting in a different school with everything else and not having the truth told and taught at those schools is not going to help Black men and boys get the consciousness that they need to continue to move forward in

spite what's around them.

MR. RAY: Yeah. You all make some great points. Marvin, close us out.

MR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely. And I think what we're going to see in 20 years and as a program manager, I don't know if I'll be around for 20 years, but I definitely would like to leave a legacy. And that is personal, community and national transformation. That's what I would like to see. That's what I believe the commission will do. What we'll see in 20 years. And those three structural areas, personal, community and national transformation on a scale that's unparallel that we have not seen in the last 400 years among Black men and boys.

MR. RAY: Powerful words. And I think we look forward to seeing that happen. One thing that I'll say obviously at Brookings with this event and particularly being led by Richard Reeves and his colleagues.

They just put out a new piece, what should new commission on the social status of Black men and boys propose here are 32 ideas for starters that has come from Brookings scholars. We know that you all will be checking it out. We look forward to doing that work with you all.

Look this could have been a day long conversation. And we know this is part of the beginning, not the end. We look forward to doing many things with this particular commission and helping it in any way that we can. So on behalf of the Brookings Institution, we thank everyone for joining us from Senator Rubio and Representative Wilson and the members of the commission and all the people who attended, thank you. And let's hope that in 20 years that we have some transformative action. Thank you all for attending today.

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

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