

No. 3

(House Joint Resolution No. 6)

A House Joint Resolution concerning

Governor's Commission on Black Males

FOR the purpose of requesting the Governor to establish a Commission on Black Males to study the nature and extent of problems of employment, health care, criminal justice, and education for Black males; and generally relating to the study of problems confronting Black males.

WHEREAS, All Maryland citizens should have the opportunity to lead healthy and productive lives; and

WHEREAS, Historical disenfranchisement, discrimination, inadequate education and skill levels, damaged self esteem, and thwarted aspirations have often undermined the chances of poor Blacks to compete successfully in the labor market; and

WHEREAS, Costs to society increase as a result of high unemployment in this segment of the population, resulting in increases in welfare rolls, involvement with drugs and substance abuse, health problems, crime, and alienation from the family and society; and

- WHEREAS, The unemployment rate for Black males between the ages 16 and 20 has been a persistent problem for more than 20 years; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, national statistics indicate that over 30 percent of Black males between ages 16 and 19 were unemployed, compared with 16 percent of White males who were unemployed; and

WHEREAS, Only 6.8 percent of the students attending Maryland's 13 four-year colleges and universities are Black males; and

WHEREAS, Black males account for 32.5 percent of Maryland's school children but make up 67 percent of public school suspensions; and

WHEREAS, Black males have also traditionally faced limited access to health care; and

WHEREAS, Black males have for the last two consecutive years experienced a decrease in life span and are at a higher risk for AIDS, hypertension, and alcohol, drug, and tobacco use and abuse; and

WHEREAS, Due to the stresses created by these limitations, Black males often repeat the cycle of victimization through peer pressure, teen pregnancy, and violence; and

WHEREAS, Most murder victims are Black males, and fifty-one percent of the Black murder victims are under the age of thirty; and