



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0715, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

URGING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL COMMISSION TO EXAMINE THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE IMPACT OF RACE

WHEREAS, recent incidents of police involved shootings and police tactics have led to major protests across the United States; and

WHEREAS, the August 9, 2014 shooting by a police officer of an unarmed African American teen, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri and the subsequent decision of a Grand Jury not to indict that officer have undermined trust in the impartiality of the criminal justice system and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the July 17, 2014 chokehold of an African American male, Eric Garner, in Staten Island, New York and the subsequent refusal of a Grand Jury to indict any of the officers involved have led to a sustained public outcry against the excessive use of force by police officers, particularly in cases involving African Americans; and

WHEREAS, since the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, Akai Curley was killed by police in Brooklyn, New York, and Tamir Rice a 12 year old in Cleveland, Ohio was shot to death as he played with a toy gun; and

WHEREAS, Jon Burge a former police commander in Chicago tortured more than 100 African American males from 1972 to 1991 and was never convicted of torture; and

WHEREAS, African American males are six times more likely to be incarcerated than White males and 2.5 times more likely than Hispanic males; and

WHEREAS, African American males are disproportionately targeted for police stops, struck by police gunfire, and arrested; and

WHEREAS, according to Pro Publica, African American males are 21 times more likely to be shot and killed by police than their white peers; and

WHEREAS, if current trends continue one of every three Black males born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime; as can one of every six Latino males; compared to one of every 17 White males; and

WHEREAS, African Americans make up roughly 12 percent of the United States population, while in 2011 Black Americans constituted 30 percent of the persons arrested for a property offense and 38 percent of persons arrested for a violent offense; and

WHEREAS, African American youth account for 16 percent of all children in America yet make up 28 percent of juvenile arrests;

WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of our criminal justice system and the impact of Race thereon will allow all Americans to have a greater level of confidence in law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of our criminal justice system and the impact of race thereon will allow Cook

County to work more effectively toward the goal of reducing the overpopulation of our jail; and

WHEREAS the overwhelming majority of law enforcement officials serve and protect our communities with dignity, professionalism and honor.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the President of Cook County and the Cook County Board of Commissioners that we urge the President of the United States, Barack Obama, to establish a National Commission on the issue of race in our criminal justice system, with the purpose of issuing a report; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the aforementioned report should detail best practices to achieve the goal of reducing the number of African American males entering the criminal justice system; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the aforementioned report should also detail best practices to reduce the number of African American males who are killed by police officers; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be sent promptly to the attention of the President of the United States, Barack Obama, by the Secretary to the Cook County Board of Commissioners.