

City of Houston, Texas, Ordinance No. 2021-_____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, HOUSTON, TEXAS, RELATING TO THE CREATION OF THE HOUSTON WOMEN'S COMMISSION; CONTAINING FINDINGS AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE FOREGOING SUBJECT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

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WHEREAS, the rights and needs of women are matters of vital concern to the City of Houston; and

WHEREAS, women face disproportionate inequities in healthcare, employment, and safety in the City of Houston and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated issues of inequity for women in Houston and globally; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to identify and address inequities that women face and improve the quality of life for women in Houston; and

WHEREAS, in order to better recognize the rights and meet the needs of women, the City desires to provide for greater cooperation, communication, and coordination of functions and services on a City-wide basis; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS:

Section 1. That the findings contained in the preamble of this Ordinance are determined to be true and correct and are hereby adopted as part of this Ordinance.

Section 2. That Article XI of Chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances, Houston, Texas, is hereby amended by adding a new Division 2 following Division 1, which contains Sections 2-326 through 2-331, and reads as follows:

"DIVISION 2. HOUSTON WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Sec. 2-326. Creation; purposes.

There is hereby created the Houston Women's Commission ("commission"). The commission shall be responsible for advising and making recommendations to the mayor, city council, and department directors on issues pertaining to the well-being and advancement of women

and families. The mayor shall annually assign to the commission a topic of study and discussion, on which the commission shall report at least annually to the mayor and city council, and to council committees as requested. The subjects to be addressed by the commission shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Developing programs to identify and address disparities in healthcare;
- (2) Developing programs to address wage inequity and employment issues;
- (3) Developing programs to identify and address safety and security issues across communities and industries;
- (4) Developing community-based programs to enhance the quality of life for women in Houston;
- (5) Developing programs to assist women and women's organizations in taking full advantage of federal, state and local funding opportunities; and
- (6) Identifying areas in which gathering information through further study would benefit women in Houston.

Sec. 2-327. Appointment of members.

The commission shall consist of no less than 15 and no more than 25 regular members, to be appointed by the mayor and subject to confirmation by the city council, as specified in this section. These positions shall be numbered 1 through 25, though up to ten positions may be left vacant. The mayor shall designate the commission's chairperson from among the membership of the commission. The city attorney shall designate a representative from the legal department to render legal advice and attend commission meetings as requested by the commission's chairperson, but such person shall not be a member of the commission and shall not have a vote.

Sec. 2-328. Composition of commission; positions; terms of members.

- (a) Twelve of the regular members of the commission shall be residents of the city or work within the city. The remaining membership positions need not be occupied by residents of the city, provided they reside in the Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget within the Executive Office of the President of the United States. The

membership shall have an interest in issues affecting women and families and shall share a commitment to the goals of the commission.

- (b) Members shall be broadly representative of the community at large with regard to race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, LGBT+ status, religious affiliation, and economic sector.
- (c) Members shall serve a four-year term of office and the terms of office for positions on the commission shall be as follows:
 - (1) The terms of members serving in odd-numbered positions shall expire on January 2, 2023 and every four years thereafter.
 - (2) The terms of members serving in even-numbered positions shall expire on January 2, 2025 and every four years thereafter.
- (d) Any member serving in a position for which the term has expired shall continue to serve until the member's successor in that position is appointed, confirmed and qualified.
- (e) The commission shall have four alternate member positions numbered 1 through 4. The persons appointed to three of the alternate positions shall be residents of the city; the remaining alternate position need not be occupied by a resident of the city, provided the appointee resides in the Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget within the Executive Office of the President of the United States. The persons appointed to the alternate positions shall serve for four-year terms. In the absence of a regular member from a commission meeting, a staff member of the Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions may call an alternate member to attend a commission meeting. The alternate members shall be called for service on a rotating basis. When so called and serving, an alternate member shall have the same rights and responsibilities as a regular member.

Sec. 2-329. Meetings.

Regular commission meetings shall be held at least four times per year. The commission may establish for itself rules of order that are consistent with the City of Houston Code of Ordinances and not in conflict with state law. Special meetings may be held in accordance with commission rules. The commission shall elect a vice-chair at the first

commission meeting and thereafter at the first meeting of each calendar year. A quorum of the members of the commission shall consist of not less than a majority of the members. Neither the commission nor any member shall have power to take action except by authority of majority vote.

Sec. 2-330. Assistance by certain city departments.

The directors of the Mayor's Office on Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence, the Office of Business Opportunity, the police department, and the Houston Health Department and their staffs shall provide requested assistance to the commission. The director of the Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions shall designate a city employee to maintain the records of the commission and serve as secretary to the committee.

Sec. 2-331. Compensation.

The members of the committee, in the performance of their duties as such, shall serve without compensation, provided that any member who is a city employee shall continue to receive regular compensation while serving on the committee."

Section 3. That the City Attorney is hereby authorized to direct the publisher of the Code of Ordinances, Houston, Texas, (the "Code") to make such nonsubstantive changes to the Code as are necessary to conform to the provisions adopted in this Ordinance, and also to make such changes to the provisions adopted in this Ordinance to conform them to the provisions and conventions of the published Code.

Section 4. That, if any provision, section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance, or the application of same to any person or set of circumstances, is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, void or invalid, the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance or their application to other persons or sets of circumstances shall not be affected thereby, it being the intent of the City Council in adopting this ordinance that no portion hereof or provision or regulation contained herein shall become inoperative or fail by reason of any unconstitutionality, voidness or invalidity of any other

portion hereof, and all provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable for that purpose.

Section 5. That there exists a public emergency requiring that this Ordinance be passed finally on the date of its introduction as requested in writing by the Mayor; therefore, this Ordinance shall be passed finally on such date and shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.

PASSED AND APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2021.

Mayor of the City of Houston

Prepared by Legal Dept. _____
RAW:jmb 8/26/2021 Assistant City Attorney
Requested by Maria Montes, Director, Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions
L.D. File No. 0422100004001