

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**



UNOFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING

March 19, 2014

One Judiciary Square, 441 Fourth Street, NW, Conference Room 842

ATTENDEES

Commissioners:

Nkechi Taifa, Chairperson
Michael Ward, Vice-Chairperson
Edwin Powell, Secretary
Motoko Aizawa
Mathew McCollough
John D. Robinson
David Scruggs

Commission on Human Rights Staff:

David C. Simmons, Chief Administrative Law Judge
Eli Bruch, Administrative Law Judge
Dianne S. Harris, Administrative Law Judge
Ken Barton, Law Clerk

Office of Human Rights Staff:

Monica Palacio, Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Taifa called the Commission's March meeting to order at 6:35pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Secretary Powell conducted the roll call. Since eight Commissioners were not present, no quorum was reached and the Commission was unable to transact business at the meeting.

III. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY MEETING

The Commission did not adopt the Commission's January meeting minutes.

IV. REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Monica Palacio, OHR's director, gave the report on behalf of OHR and gave a brief

overview of its performance since the last Commission meeting.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year, OHR docketed 147 cases, 126 cases were closed, and mediation settlements reached \$848,944.80.

Director Palacio told the Commissioners about OHR's new "Accessibility Friendly" campaign. To earn "Accessibility Friendly" status, a restaurant must comply with disability accessibility laws and can earn a "We Pledge to Be Accessibility Friendly" window decal that shows its desire to be a welcoming place for persons with disabilities.

Director Palacio told the Commissioners how OHR is launching a new advertisement campaign to ensure District restaurants, hotels and other designated public accommodations have gender neutral single-stall bathroom signage.

OHR will hold a 10 year anniversary celebration of the Language Access Act on April 15th at the Carnegie Library. Another Language Access event geared more toward members of the community will also be held in June.

OHR is acquiring additional space on the 5th floor to accommodate its need for more offices and conference rooms.

The City Council's oversight hearing of the Office and Commission will be held on March 25th.

OHR held a brown bag luncheon with Dr. Edgar Kahn, last year's Neil Alexander awardee. Additional brown bag luncheons will be held in the future and the Commissioners will be invited to attend.

V. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Chief Judge Simmons delivered the report of the Commission and presented an overview of its performance since the last Commission meeting.

The Commission currently has a docket of 8 Commission cases, 3 OHR cases, and 5 CBX appeals.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year, the Commission closed 4 Commission cases, 1 OHR case, and 1 CBX case.

The Rules Committee will work toward finalizing revisions to Chapters 2-4.

Plans for this year's Award Gala are already underway. A request was made to the Kaiser Family Foundation to reserve their conference space, but we have not heard back from them. Chairperson Taifa and Commissioners Scruggs and Aizawa will soon begin working on the selection of this year's Neil Alexander Awardee. Finally, a meeting with Georgetown Street Law was held to debrief the Youth Human Rights Ambassador

program. One suggestion discussed was to incorporate Commissioners into the trainings about the DCHRA. Commissioner Powell volunteered to help with this effort.

Judge Simmons met with the Hawaiian Civil Rights Commission when visiting Hawaii last month. He compared and contrasted the DCHRA and their civil rights laws for the Commissioners.

The idea of the Commission creating a new moot court competition was briefly discussed.

Judge Simmons introduced the Commission's new law clerk, Ken Barton.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business was discussed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

The City Council's Oversight Hearing of the Commission will be held on March 25th. Chairperson Taifa and Judge Simmons will testify on behalf of the Commission.

VIII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Michael Sindram discussed several concerns with the Commission.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Language Access Act 10 year anniversary celebration will be held on April 15th.

The Fair Housing Symposium will be held on April 29th.

Chairperson Taifa told her fellow Commissioners that Commissioner Budd was recently honored at an African-American LGBT event, and Judge Harris starred in a video about Fanny Lou Hamer.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The Commission's March meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commission held an Executive Session closed to the public.