

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

February 16, 2010

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 at 10:15 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

PRESENT Norman Gelman, Doris Cowl, Joyce DeLaurentis, Kanan Hudhud and Gary Norman.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES The minutes of the January meeting were approved as written.

Chairperson Gelman informed Commissioner that the Executive Director is not at the meeting today and is still at home ill.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached). Chairperson Gelman stated that he had a conversation with Senator Mikulski's office and learned that they had not received the letter we previously sent. The letter was faxed to Jessica Berry, the staff person for Senator Mikulski who chairs the sub-committee that deals with our issue. In the letter we were requesting an appointment with Senator Mikulski, but instead will probably meet first with Jessica Berry. There is a problem with the timing of the federal payments and how it affects MCHR's budget. The Deputy Director will explain later. Another issue is that MCHR would like Senator Mikulski to make an appointment with the new head of the EEOC, and make sure Senator Mikulski understands, possibly after talking to Jessica Berry, that the EEOC does not allocate cuts on the basis of performance. EEOC allocates cuts across the board. EEOC publishes aggregated data on Fair Employment Practice Agencies (FEPA). We were told by Acting EEOC Chairman Ishimaru that the agency treats all FEPAs alike, without regard to performance. He alluded to staff resistance to performance-based allocation but would not be more specific. When the chairperson spoke with the analyst who deals with the EEOC at the Federal Office of Management and Budget he said that he had never up to that point looked behind the aggregated data.

Outgoing Letters on Behalf of the Commissioners	Commissioner Cowl made a motion that all Commissioners should have an opportunity to review and agree on the content in all letters written on behalf of the Commission by the Chairperson. If timing is appropriate, Commissioners should see letters during a meeting. If time is not appropriate and it is deemed that the Chairperson and the Executive Director feel that the letter needs to go out, Commissioners should, at minimum, receive a copy of the letter. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hudhud. Motion passed.
Annual Report	Chairperson Gelman inquired as to whether Commissioners had read the Letter of Transmittal in the Annual Report. The Chairperson and the Executive Director did call attention to the FEPA funding problem in that letter.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT	In the absence of the Executive Director the Deputy Director said that there is no Executive Director's report this month.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT	Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director reported that MCHR is in good shape with the EEOC contract. Time in processing of cases is rising due to staffing.
Budget Hearings	The Deputy Director also stated that MCHR's budget hearings have been held. The budget hearings went very well. The analyst concurred with the Governor's allowance.
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT	Commissioners received copies of the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report provided by the Assistant Director (See attached). Chairperson Gelman informed Commissioners that the Assistant Director is not here today.
Information Technology Unit	The Information Technology Manager stated that there were 10,574 hits and 2,842 visitors to the Spanish website. Chairperson Gelman requested that MCHR track the number of complaints filed from the Spanish website.
	There were a total of 12,137 visitors and 133,868 hits to the regular website. There were twenty-four (24) employment complaints and one (1) public accommodation complaint filed online.
GENERAL COUNSEL'S REPORT	Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report and the Training/Education Campaign Summary (See attached).
Human Rights Day in Annapolis	The General Counsel informed Commissioners that due to the weather the Human Rights Day in Annapolis was cancelled for today. When it is rescheduled General Counsel will let Commissioners know.

Legislation

Name Change Bill	The Senate hearing on the Name Change Bill was held and a vote was taken, but we do not know the status. The House hearing has not been scheduled.
Closed Captioned - Hard of Hearing Bill	The General Counsel reported that the Senate hearing was held.
Senate Bill 243	Source of Income Bill is back. MCHR will be providing testimony on this bill.
Senate Bill 583 House Bill 1022	Gender Identity Bill – The hearing is scheduled for March 3, 2010. The General Counsel has not yet seen these bills to see if they are any different from what they were in prior years.
Senate Bill 463 – Human Relations	Employment Discrimination Based on Family Responsibilities – Prohibitions – this bill adds as a protected class family responsibility. MCHR is trying to get clarification because the bill does not define what family responsibility means or covers.
Source of Income Bill	The General Counsel was asked to explain the purpose of the Source of Income Bill. The goal is to prevent landlords from discriminating against a person or family based on where they get money from to pay their rent. The real issue is the source of income being used by landlords to discriminate based on race or national origin so as to reject persons who have Section 8 certificates.
NEW BUSINESS	Chairperson Gelman informed Commissioners that the Mediation presentation will be postponed until the March meeting. Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Barbara Wilson