

WEBVTT

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00:00:04.260 --> 00:00:08.310

Cleveland L. Horton II: And we also have, Commissioner Rosen on the call as well.

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00:00:10.090 --> 00:00:10.580

Eileen Levitt: Okay.

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00:00:10.580 --> 00:00:12.349

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Yes, hello, thank you.

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00:00:14.350 --> 00:00:18.169

Cleveland L. Horton II: Cleveland Horton, Cleveland Horton, Executive Director, present.

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00:00:19.210 --> 00:00:22.280

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Yolanda Sonier, Deputy Director, here.

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00:00:24.100 --> 00:00:26.669

Glendora Hughes: Glendora Hughes, General Counsel.

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00:00:27.470 --> 00:00:29.549

Nicolette Young: Nicolette Young, Assistant Director.

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00:00:31.030 --> 00:00:34.299

Candice Crenshaw: Candace Crenshaw, Education and Outreach Director. Good morning.

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00:00:35.760 --> 00:00:37.460

Alesha.Bell: Good morning, Alicia.

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00:00:37.850 --> 00:00:39.160

Alesha.Bell: I'm sorry.

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00:00:39.160 --> 00:00:41.939

Eileen Levitt: You'll go ahead. I said who else is left?

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00:00:41.940 --> 00:00:45.460

Alesha.Bell: Yes, Alicia Bell, Civil Rights Officer Supervisor.

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00:00:47.440 --> 00:00:48.539

Eileen Levitt: Anyone else?

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00:00:48.980 --> 00:00:53.190

Cleveland L. Horton II: We do have Caden. Kadian, you want to introduce yourself on the call for the record, please?

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00:00:56.980 --> 00:01:00.189

Cleveland L. Horton II: We can't really hear you, Katie. I can hear you faintly, but...

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00:01:00.360 --> 00:01:02.340

Cleveland L. Horton II: Can't really hear your voice a lot.

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00:01:02.340 --> 00:01:07.070

kadian.sinclair: I'm not sure what's wrong with the computer, but Katie and Sinclair, Administrative Specialist.

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00:01:07.690 --> 00:01:17.280

Cleveland L. Horton II: Alright, we can hear you just a little bit. We know you're there, Kadian, so we got you. We got you. She's our, administrative specialist and our admin team, so Kadian, Sinclair.

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00:01:21.100 --> 00:01:23.090

Eileen Levitt: Have we captured everyone?

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00:01:23.450 --> 00:01:24.830

Cleveland L. Horton II: Yep, we got everybody.

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00:01:24.830 --> 00:01:26.869

Eileen Levitt: Do we have any members of the public?

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00:01:28.550 --> 00:01:29.440

Eileen Levitt: You don't think...

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00:01:29.440 --> 00:01:30.259

Cleveland L. Horton II: I don't see any.

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00:01:30.260 --> 00:01:32.930

Eileen Levitt: I don't see anybody, but I have to ask.

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00:01:33.280 --> 00:01:38.890

Eileen Levitt: Okay, Chairperson's report, I think...

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00:01:39.100 --> 00:01:41.449

Eileen Levitt: We're gonna have to come back to that.

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00:01:41.620 --> 00:01:43.800

Eileen Levitt: Okay, staff reports.

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00:01:44.250 --> 00:01:50.800

Cleveland L. Horton II: Cool. Thanks, Commissioner Levitt. So, good morning, everybody. Hopefully, everybody's off to a great start this morning.

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00:01:50.860 --> 00:01:58.709

Cleveland L. Horton II: You know, obviously, we are still, dealing with a number of the administrative changes that are happening,

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00:01:58.770 --> 00:02:18.590

Cleveland L. Horton II: as it pertains to civil rights, DEI, etc. We recently did receive, guidance from HUD, that we are still kind of conversing with internally to determine, how, we are going to respond, if we respond to it. The guidance does change significantly.

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00:02:18.590 --> 00:02:28.540

Cleveland L. Horton II: Our training funds, for instance, so typically we were getting around \$3,000 per FTE, which is the full-time equivalent, which is basically per position.

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00:02:28.540 --> 00:02:41.110

Cleveland L. Horton II: Hud has changed that to a flat rate of \$5,000 for each agency. So that is a significant change. So that's probably a reduction in training funds of about \$50,000 for our agency.

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00:02:41.110 --> 00:02:51.110

Cleveland L. Horton II: Hud has also, per their guidance, changed what they deem to be substantially equivalent. So as you all know, typically in the federal government.

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00:02:51.110 --> 00:03:04.920

Cleveland L. Horton II: most agencies, and that will be for HUD or EEOC, had always been deemed to be substantially equivalent, as long as your laws, your state or local laws, were not more restrictive than the federal law, right?

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00:03:04.920 --> 00:03:20.839

Cleveland L. Horton II: The administration has changed that policy now, right? So, before, the federal government was the floor, now it appears that the federal government is making themselves the ceiling. So they have indicated that for those agencies who have broader

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00:03:21.170 --> 00:03:36.869

Cleveland L. Horton II: protected classes, right? And that could be source of income, that could be, gender identity. Any of those protected classes that are outside of the seven federally protected classes, then HUD is now saying that you are no longer substantially equivalent.

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00:03:36.880 --> 00:03:52.970

Cleveland L. Horton II: So what does that mean, right? That basically means that HUD, at any point in time, could move to remove our agency from the FAT program. That hit to our agency, will probably be somewhere close to a million dollars, but I'll let, Nicolette

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00:03:52.970 --> 00:04:03.559

Cleveland L. Horton II: who's the... who's the budget person, but I'm sure somewhere close to a million dollar hit on the federal side if HUD was to... was... is to move to remove us from the FAT program. So.

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00:04:03.560 --> 00:04:16.579

Cleveland L. Horton II: I've been engaging in conversations with, our General Counsel, as well as other agencies, across the country around how we're going to respond to this. There's supposed to be a scheduled FAP call between this week and next week.

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00:04:16.579 --> 00:04:20.230

Cleveland L. Horton II: for the FAST to talk about how collectively we're going to respond

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00:04:20.230 --> 00:04:37.120

Cleveland L. Horton II: potentially to, this new HUD guidance, so I will keep you all updated as we continue to engage in those conversations. But, it is... it is very significant in the fact that, the federal government is basically saying if you protect anything outside of what we protect.

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00:04:37.120 --> 00:04:51.720

Cleveland L. Horton II: Then we are going to consider you to be substantially equivalent. Not to make this a political conversation, but to notate, though, the political, impact of this, all... most of the state... most of the red states only protect

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00:04:51.740 --> 00:05:03.610

Cleveland L. Horton II: the 7 federally protected, classes, right? Most of the facts that are in red states, they stick to the seven. Most of the blue states outside of that go beyond the 7 protected classes.

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00:05:03.610 --> 00:05:19.659

Cleveland L. Horton II: So you would almost have an elimination of most of the blue states who have FAPS. They would be potentially removed from the FAT program, which would be significant, not just to Maryland, but to all the other states impacted as well. So again, there is some ongoing concern and conversations around

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00:05:19.660 --> 00:05:24.000

Cleveland L. Horton II: what would this look like? Now, HUD has not officially indicated

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00:05:24.310 --> 00:05:39.670

Cleveland L. Horton II: that they are going to be moving folks out of the FAT program, but I would say, as many folks know, well, if that wasn't your intent, you wouldn't have put in the guidance, right? So, I do believe in looking at what's happening, it's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when.

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00:05:39.670 --> 00:05:55.100

Cleveland L. Horton II: And just making sure that we're prepared for this conversation, when it does arise, and that we're prepared to move forward and respond to it accordingly. But, again, we've had conversations with the AG's office. I know there is a conglomerate of AGEs who are also having conversations.

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00:05:55.100 --> 00:05:57.630

Cleveland L. Horton II: around this HUD guidance to determine

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00:05:57.630 --> 00:06:12.510

Cleveland L. Horton II: what should be the appropriate response. Obviously, our AG's office here in Maryland is a part... is a part of that conglomerate, and we have been in communication with them as well in reference to the impact to our agency. So, again, I will keep you all updated with that.

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00:06:12.510 --> 00:06:20.480

Cleveland L. Horton II: You know, EOC right now doesn't have a quorum, right? So, part of our concern is that once EEOC does have a quorum.

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00:06:20.480 --> 00:06:33.989

Cleveland L. Horton II: that EOC may potentially move in this same direction as well, and we'll need to ensure that we are prepared to respond to that as well, if that should occur as well.

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00:06:33.990 --> 00:06:45.060

Cleveland L. Horton II: these are probably the top two things that we are dealing with right now, and considering and having conversations about, to ensure that our agency is positioned to respond and to address it. I know that.

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00:06:45.410 --> 00:06:48.650

Cleveland L. Horton II: part of our response. Obviously, we'll be working with the administration.

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00:06:48.650 --> 00:07:11.440

Cleveland L. Horton II: to kind of figure out what supplemental funds, general funds that we can get, in the event that we do take a significant hit from the federal side. Again, especially when we think about our budget and what that means for us, these are the conversations that we're having currently. So, the administration has assured our agency and other agencies alike that if there's any diminution in federal funds, that they will supplement those funds, but

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00:07:11.450 --> 00:07:29.779

Cleveland L. Horton II: again, we want to make sure that that does officially happen in the event that we do see a reduction in our federal funds. So, again, it's just an ongoing conversation that we are having. So, I just wanted to update you all with that, and then if there are any questions about that, I'll take them at this time.

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00:07:30.220 --> 00:07:36.950

Gina McKnight-Smith: Cleveland, real quick, can you give us some... shed some light on, like, kind of how the precedence of this...

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00:07:37.200 --> 00:07:48.179

Gina McKnight-Smith: has... is... is very different, I believe. And when policy changes are happening at the federal level, don't they normally, like, go through a...

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00:07:48.450 --> 00:07:55.300

Gina McKnight-Smith: public process, especially public... like, the Federal Register, like, I don't... I haven't...

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00:07:55.300 --> 00:07:56.420

Glendora Hughes: It's not normal.

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00:07:56.420 --> 00:07:57.350

Cleveland L. Horton II: Okay.

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00:07:57.350 --> 00:08:05.180

Gina McKnight-Smith: So, I... cause I'm like... You know, these things are... seem to be just being done, and... and not...

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00:08:05.720 --> 00:08:07.550

Gina McKnight-Smith: Vetted the way.

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00:08:08.300 --> 00:08:19.800

Cleveland L. Horton II: Yeah, it's a... that's a great question, Commissioner McKnight, but I'll say, it's just a new ballgame, right? This is completely different from anything that we've ever saw. So, for instance.

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00:08:19.980 --> 00:08:36.459

Cleveland L. Horton II: we were notified... no, every year, we go to the IRA conference, right? Our agency supports the Aurora Conference. I sit on the board of IORA, for those who don't know, that's the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies. So every year, our agency supports IORA. We send staff to the training conference every year.

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00:08:36.460 --> 00:08:49.289

Cleveland L. Horton II: So this year, the conference was, you know, again, starts on a Sunday. We had a call with HUD on Tuesday. Hud indicated on Tuesday that agencies were no longer allowed to use funds for the Aurora Conference.

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00:08:49.290 --> 00:09:03.220

Cleveland L. Horton II: Right? So what does that mean? Well, normally, most folks know, most rational folks know, that if you've got a conference that starts on Sunday, right, that all of your provisions for the conference have already been made, right? Travel, hotel, transportation, everything.

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00:09:03.220 --> 00:09:11.220

Cleveland L. Horton II: HUD indicated on Tuesday that we could no longer use funds for the IRR conference, right? So every agency, including us.

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00:09:11.220 --> 00:09:13.540

Cleveland L. Horton II: Who had already procured those funds.

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00:09:13.550 --> 00:09:30.760

Cleveland L. Horton II: to use for the ROO conference and spent those funds, HUD was not going to reimburse us for the ROO Conference, right? So there were a lot of conversations with HUD about that. There are, again, this part of our conversation now, as well as we continue to have this conversation in reference to how we respond to it.

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00:09:30.760 --> 00:09:46.300

Cleveland L. Horton II: legally, and to see how this is actually going to play out, because we had allocated and received approval from HUD directly to spend about \$18,000 for the IORA conference, and we do have it documented in writing.

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00:09:46.300 --> 00:09:59.360

Cleveland L. Horton II: And they pulled that away from us on Tuesday after we had already spent the money for the conference, where normally we don't request reimbursement until after the conference, because that's been normal practice, so there was no concern to do it ahead of time.

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00:09:59.380 --> 00:10:17.659

Cleveland L. Horton II: HUD snatched the money back and said, no, we're not authorizing any agency to be reimbursed for any funds using... for the IORA conference, because the AORA conference no longer aligns with the priorities of the administration, is what the language that was used on the call on Tuesday.

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00:10:17.740 --> 00:10:32.920

Cleveland L. Horton II: just like issuing guidance. Now, I will say that HUD typically, when they make changes to the guidance, they don't necessarily have to go through the public comment process, right? But I will say that HUD has never made anything, none of the federal agencies to that regard.

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00:10:32.920 --> 00:10:39.700

Cleveland L. Horton II: A significant change this way, that literally, completely, 180 degrees, flips

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00:10:39.710 --> 00:10:54.640

Cleveland L. Horton II: how they view substantial equivalency, right? It's never been a system that says, if you do more than what we do, right, then we consider you not to be substantially equivalent. This is the first time, at least in my tenure working in the government.

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00:10:54.640 --> 00:11:17.210

Cleveland L. Horton II: that the federal government has taken this posture. But again, I think we have seen little tidbits of it coming, but now it's here, right? Because there have been agencies who were saying, hey, HUD is pulling back from the emotional support animals, right? There have been a number of agencies throughout the country who were saying that their cases were sent back saying HUD is no longer going to approve those.

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00:11:17.210 --> 00:11:32.519

Cleveland L. Horton II: HUD recently took down all the guidances they have for emotional support animals, so HUD is no longer reimbursing or paying for emotional support cases in fair housing, which is also significant to those who have disabilities, right?

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00:11:32.520 --> 00:11:46.820

Cleveland L. Horton II: Again, this is another issue, right? So, on top of that, we know that HUD has been very careful about gender identity, right? We know they've been coming after that from the EOC side, as well as from a housing side, which is part of why they've included

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00:11:46.900 --> 00:11:59.219

Cleveland L. Horton II: this provision around anything outside of the seven protected classes, right? Because that is their way of getting to folks who do have gender identity, source of income, and criminal records, because

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00:11:59.220 --> 00:12:23.409

Cleveland L. Horton II: Those were the ones they even used as examples in the guidance, right? So, when we take a look at what's happening, to your question, Commissioner McKnight, we've never seen this before, right, to this magnitude, and we all are trying to figure out what is the best way for us to respond to it. Part of what we talked about at the Aurora conference was making sure that agencies are utilizing their voices and responding in a way

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00:12:23.410 --> 00:12:37.759

Cleveland L. Horton II: right, that's appropriate, whether it's through litigation or what have you, that we've got to be very strategic on how we respond to it, because it is going to be significant as we continue to move forward. But again, we just haven't seen anything like this before.

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00:12:38.000 --> 00:12:43.579

Gina McKnight-Smith: I would add to that response, too, that the public needs to be made more aware

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00:12:43.870 --> 00:12:48.580

Gina McKnight-Smith: Of what these changes impact, and how they impact the...

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00:12:49.260 --> 00:13:00.649

Gina McKnight-Smith: the citizens of each of these states, because I don't think that's widely known, like, just the... the impact of what that means.

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00:13:00.900 --> 00:13:06.350

Gina McKnight-Smith: And... and I think that that's something that would be valuable for the public to know as well.

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00:13:06.350 --> 00:13:23.089

Cleveland L. Horton II: No, I agree, and if you all would like for us to send something out, right, we would, you know, again, welcome to engage in that conversation around, you know, but if you all would like for us to create something to potentially send out, that is something that we could prepare as well, if that's something that the commissioners would like for us to do.

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00:13:23.090 --> 00:13:34.290

Gina McKnight-Smith: I mean, I would... I wouldn't get ahead of any litigation or anything that could be... I wouldn't want to do that, but... but I would keep in mind that there has to be some...

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00:13:34.420 --> 00:13:37.729

Gina McKnight-Smith: Some groundswell, beyond just...

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00:13:37.940 --> 00:13:44.969

Gina McKnight-Smith: the offices, right? It has to be something there, but I wouldn't want to get ahead of any, you know.

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00:13:44.970 --> 00:13:45.849

Cleveland L. Horton II: Absolutely, I agree.



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00:13:45.850 --> 00:13:47.929  
Gina McKnight-Smith: litigation or anything, but yeah.

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00:13:51.270 --> 00:13:52.899  
Cleveland L. Horton II: Any other questions?

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00:13:55.310 --> 00:13:56.530  
Cleveland L. Horton II: Commissioner Rosen?

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00:14:00.420 --> 00:14:03.029  
ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Yes, so thank you so much for that.

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00:14:04.070 --> 00:14:07.469  
ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Synopsis there of what's going on.

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00:14:08.130 --> 00:14:10.340  
ASL Interpreter-Courtney: And I appreciate you.

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00:14:10.750 --> 00:14:23.850  
ASL Interpreter-Courtney: leading that portion of it, and also your staff, because really, we need to be prepared for whatever is going to be coming. So, my question is, do you get any guidance from the government

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00:14:24.090 --> 00:14:30.260  
ASL Interpreter-Courtney: or from... The offices about how to approach this kind of situation.

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00:14:31.470 --> 00:14:50.529  
Cleveland L. Horton II: Yeah, so normally what happens is there's a track called where all of the state agencies meet. We've been meeting ever since this new administration took office. We typically meet every other week to talk about the different changes, and obviously this is obviously one that's on the agenda now to kind of figure out how we're going to move forward.

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00:14:50.530 --> 00:14:54.520  
Cleveland L. Horton II: We typically, because there... to Commissioner McKnight's point.

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00:14:54.560 --> 00:15:12.929  
Cleveland L. Horton II: there's a certain level of legalities with this particular issue, that we're trying to allow the attorneys to figure that piece out. So, our AG's office is working with other AGs to figure out the appropriate legal response to what's happening, and then they will provide us with guidance in reference to

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00:15:12.930 --> 00:15:24.209  
Cleveland L. Horton II: what we're going to be doing moving forward. As I also indicated, a lot of the agencies are meeting together to really talk about, hey, what are you doing? This is what we're thinking about, right? What is the messaging?

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00:15:24.210 --> 00:15:49.099

Cleveland L. Horton II: That we're going to be putting out so that we are seeing a consistent message around these changes, not necessarily from the legal aspect of it, right? But just from a public information aspect of it to make folks aware of what's happening and the potential impacts to not just our agencies, but to public service, right? Because individuals coming into public service now will no longer be able to file certain

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00:15:49.100 --> 00:16:06.760

Cleveland L. Horton II: with the federal government. They all will be shifting to state and local agencies, which will create a backlog for state and local agencies to be able to respond to all of these with no federal support. The impact that it will be, again, on the disability community that no longer will be accepting these emotional support animal cases.

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00:16:06.760 --> 00:16:20.969

Cleveland L. Horton II: which is going to be significant, not just for future cases, but cases that are already in the queue, that they will be resending and pushing back, is going to be significant to those in the disability community. So, really trying to format messaging that, whether it's coming from

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00:16:20.970 --> 00:16:32.859

Cleveland L. Horton II: the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, or the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, or what have you, that our messaging is all aligned so that we're all saying the same thing. So, we are engaging in those conversations as we speak.

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00:16:34.000 --> 00:16:41.290

Glendora Hughes: On the legal side, just to fill in, there are, several

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00:16:41.470 --> 00:16:54.959

Glendora Hughes: groups, lawyers, who are meeting to address this issue. There's the, attorney generals from the blue states that are meeting to address the issue, and particularly

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00:16:55.530 --> 00:17:01.309

Glendora Hughes: our Attorney General, there is a federal litigation unit specifically

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00:17:01.370 --> 00:17:20.319

Glendora Hughes: that was put together before the, this administration, came into power to prepare to litigate, cases that are contrary to what, particularly in civil rights. And then there is

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00:17:20.359 --> 00:17:22.130

Glendora Hughes: I went to the,

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00:17:22.280 --> 00:17:35.180

Glendora Hughes: Legal Defense Fund Civil Rights Institute this past week, and, there are a couple of attorneys who are representing... who have represented the FIPS, or the Fair...

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00:17:35.390 --> 00:17:49.770

Glendora Hughes: housing initiative program organizations, nonprofits like the National Fair Housing Alliance, where they were having their funds, grants, pulled back and take it, and they are taking an interest in this.

114

00:17:50.180 --> 00:18:00.230

Glendora Hughes: attack on FAP agencies. The bottom line is this is, transactional. It's to take the money out of

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00:18:01.090 --> 00:18:06.380

Glendora Hughes: civil rights enforcement, and it also is,

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00:18:06.450 --> 00:18:23.049

Glendora Hughes: they're taking this opportunity for the, the shutdown to gut the offices. So, I just read an article, last night where they have laid off or fired

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00:18:23.420 --> 00:18:30.379

Glendora Hughes: the large percentage of the Fair Housing Equal Opportunity Department. Out of all of the

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00:18:30.570 --> 00:18:36.369

Glendora Hughes: units in HUD, That have been, laid off or fired.

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00:18:36.600 --> 00:18:40.489

Glendora Hughes: The FHEO has the largest number of

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00:18:40.780 --> 00:18:51.429

Glendora Hughes: terminations, and so basically they've gutted that department. And now, you know, they go after the states so that there's no enforcement on the state level as well.

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00:18:54.530 --> 00:18:59.899

Cleveland L. Horton II: Now, even though, again, it is a significant situation.

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00:18:59.900 --> 00:19:21.219

Cleveland L. Horton II: But I still want to remind everybody that we still have our protections. We're not going to be relaxing our protections, so folks still are protected through our agency. Our staff is fully prepared to accept any and every complaint that still comes through our agency. It may take us a little longer, but we are absolutely still going to make sure that every citizen in our state is still protected

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00:19:21.220 --> 00:19:35.919

Cleveland L. Horton II: through our protections, whether we are getting reimbursed through the federal government or not. So, we'll find a way to get it done. It is going to be, obviously, an opportunity for us to kind of figure out how do we operate in this... this new space with this new administration.

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00:19:35.920 --> 00:19:47.659

Cleveland L. Horton II: But we do want to just rest assure folks to know that, we are still the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights. Our mission, our vision has not changed, and we still will make sure that folks are protected under our law here in our state.

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00:19:56.240 --> 00:19:57.350  
Cleveland L. Horton II: Commissioner Rosa?

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00:20:01.270 --> 00:20:04.540  
Cleveland L. Horton II: One second, Commissioner Rosen, I can't hear... I can't hear the interpreter.

127  
00:20:08.730 --> 00:20:12.310  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Okay, so I wanted to follow up on...

128  
00:20:12.580 --> 00:20:23.320  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Glendora's comment. Really, that's exactly right. With federal agencies, a very... trans... One moment for the interpreter.

129  
00:20:25.040 --> 00:20:26.400  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: transactional.

130  
00:20:28.320 --> 00:20:31.069  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: So... I agree with you.

131  
00:20:31.930 --> 00:20:46.570  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: that's... that's really the problem. It's one serious challenge, and I appreciate your comment, because myself and many, many people that I work with really are affected by the federal agencies.

132  
00:20:46.840 --> 00:20:55.889  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Who are so long... Not willing to enforce the laws with individuals with disabilities.

133  
00:20:56.640 --> 00:20:57.760  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: really...

134  
00:20:59.600 --> 00:21:07.190  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: there's not much seen in action from that standpoint, so I really want to rely on the protection of the federal law.

135  
00:21:07.370 --> 00:21:10.699  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: And make sure that Americans with disabilities

136  
00:21:10.870 --> 00:21:14.960  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: the Americans with Disabilities Act, the ADA, that there's...

137  
00:21:16.060 --> 00:21:25.490  
ASL Interpreter | Andrew: No enforcement to say, really, that... We see more and more Action without consequences.

138

00:21:26.130 --> 00:21:35.290

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: For example, I called... A few agencies with telecommunication services.

139

00:21:36.870 --> 00:21:39.710

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: in... in different institutes. For some...

140

00:21:40.030 --> 00:21:50.530

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: And for some reason, they've refused to accept a relay call, some of these institutions. And so that's obviously against the law, federal and state.

141

00:21:51.310 --> 00:21:52.310

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: And...

142

00:21:52.550 --> 00:22:00.510

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: and I called the DOJ, and no one was home. And a lot of these institutions and agencies, a lot of individuals are having the same

143

00:22:00.770 --> 00:22:02.180

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: experience.

144

00:22:02.290 --> 00:22:07.650

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: So... I appreciate, Cleveland, your comment that we're still

145

00:22:07.790 --> 00:22:11.210

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Handling the situation, hopefully, and we'll see.

146

00:22:12.580 --> 00:22:16.850

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Really, it's an important situation, and we have to figure out how to do

147

00:22:17.030 --> 00:22:19.120

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: how to move forward. Thank you.

148

00:22:19.500 --> 00:22:37.870

Cleveland L. Horton II: No, thank you for your comments, Commissioner Rosen. I think, for me, that's why, it's ever so important for us to focus on collaboration, collaboration, collaboration, right? One of the things that we've really been focused on, for the last several weeks is partnering with any and everybody that we can.

149

00:22:37.870 --> 00:23:01.319

Cleveland L. Horton II: Because we recognize that when we take a look at the environment that we're in, that we cannot do this alone, right? So, it's important for us to be partnering with those advocacy organizations, those grassroots organizations, right? Those other state agencies, so that we know where the issues are, where the problems are, who has the issues, how do we help get these things resolved. So, I know Candace and her team have tried

150  
00:23:01.320 --> 00:23:02.879  
Cleveland L. Horton II: been doing a...

151  
00:23:02.950 --> 00:23:22.149  
Cleveland L. Horton II: Herculean effort to collaborate with just about everybody. I've been like, look, let's just go collaborate, collaborate, collaborate, right? And I know our team is tired, because there are a lot of collaborations happening, but they keep at it, right? Because for us, in order for us to be able to move forward, we cannot do this work alone.

152  
00:23:22.150 --> 00:23:23.660  
Stephanie Suerth: Are you...

153  
00:23:23.660 --> 00:23:24.989  
Cleveland L. Horton II: It can't just be the military.

154  
00:23:24.990 --> 00:23:31.359  
Stephanie Suerth: the kitchen door, instead of, like, walking through the driveway to her car, she, like, went to the gate and, like, went underneath.

155  
00:23:31.360 --> 00:23:32.420  
Gina McKnight-Smith: You're not human.

156  
00:23:32.420 --> 00:23:33.430  
Yolanda F. Sonnier: Hey, Stephanie.

157  
00:23:34.030 --> 00:23:35.890  
Stephanie Suerth: the front, like, the front of my car.

158  
00:23:35.890 --> 00:23:36.530  
Gina McKnight-Smith: are where it's.

159  
00:23:36.530 --> 00:23:38.169  
Stephanie Suerth: Parked up against a fence.

160  
00:23:38.290 --> 00:23:39.680  
Stephanie Suerth: And she was partnering.

161  
00:23:45.030 --> 00:24:03.720  
Cleveland L. Horton II: Thanks, Candace. So, the... so when we take a look at where we are, it is going to be important for us to figure out how do we increase our collaborations, and we think, as well, that's where our... we're hopeful that our commissioners can be impactful as well, to let us know, hey, who do we need to talk to? Who should we be in collaboration?

162  
00:24:03.810 --> 00:24:19.850

Cleveland L. Horton II: I know Commissioner Prescott has mentioned on a number of different commission meetings in reference to who we should be talking to, who we should be collaborating with, and those are the conversations that we want to continue to engage and figure out how do we increase our level of collaboration across the state, because

163

00:24:19.880 --> 00:24:24.679

Cleveland L. Horton II: that's really what we need right now, right? Because it's not just an issue that's impacting

164

00:24:24.780 --> 00:24:42.229

Cleveland L. Horton II: the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, these are issues that are impacting us throughout the entire state, and the only way that we're going to be able to get through this and continue to be able to provide a high level of service is if we figure out how to do it together moving forward. So, that is what our staff is working on currently.

165

00:24:43.480 --> 00:24:45.789

Cleveland L. Horton II: But again, thanks for your comments, Commissioner Rosen.

166

00:24:48.820 --> 00:24:51.589

Cleveland L. Horton II: Any other, questions for me?

167

00:24:57.710 --> 00:25:12.860

Cleveland L. Horton II: All right, seeing none, I'll just end my report by saying I know that we all, saw the news yesterday that the hostages were released. We want to... I want to make sure that we get on the record, obviously, that, we are pleased to hear of the agreement.

168

00:25:12.860 --> 00:25:31.339

Cleveland L. Horton II: That allowed the hostages to be returned and reunited with their families. We are hopeful, just as everyone else is, that, I think, I think it's 28 or 27, deceased bodies will also find their ways to be reunited with the members of their family as well, so that their members can, the members of their family can have...

169

00:25:31.340 --> 00:25:35.149

Cleveland L. Horton II: closure, and reference to that as well, but I did want to acknowledge

170

00:25:35.170 --> 00:25:49.869

Cleveland L. Horton II: the fact that the hostages were released. We're obviously relieved and happy that the deal was made and the hostages were reunited with their family, so I did want to take time out to acknowledge that as well. And with that, I will pass it off to Yolanda.

171

00:25:51.460 --> 00:25:54.359

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Thank you, Cleveland, and good morning to everyone.

172

00:25:55.470 --> 00:26:20.450

Yolanda F. Sonnier: I... Cleveland did give the update from the federal aspect, and he did mention that, you know, we're still open, we're still, you know, handling all of our cases, and so we still are investigating cases, we still have intakes coming in on a constant basis, and so, you know, thankfully for the community, the

Commission remains here to do the work and to continue to investigate the case.

173

00:26:20.450 --> 00:26:22.089

Yolanda F. Sonnier: as they come in.

174

00:26:22.620 --> 00:26:24.980

Yolanda F. Sonnier: The...

175

00:26:25.770 --> 00:26:37.809

Yolanda F. Sonnier: September marked the end of our EEOC contract period. We were contracted to do 547 cases, and we closed 547 cases.

176

00:26:37.830 --> 00:27:02.099

Yolanda F. Sonnier: So, that was a major, major accomplishment, a major, feat for our staff, so thank you to Alicia and her colleague, Maria, the supervisors of our employment unit, but we did have some of our staff from our housing units as well that jumped in and helped investigate some cases as well, and so...

177

00:27:02.270 --> 00:27:11.109

Yolanda F. Sonnier: You know, we... we look forward to, of course, you know, at the end of the contract was when the shutdown occurred.

178

00:27:11.580 --> 00:27:14.740

Yolanda F. Sonnier: And so, we don't know...

179

00:27:14.960 --> 00:27:38.959

Yolanda F. Sonnier: you know, we haven't been able to speak to EEOC, we don't know if, you know, all of those cases will be accepted, you know, for credit. We haven't been able to have any other conversations, so we don't know what our contract number, what our goal for this coming year. We are anticipating it to remain the same, unless otherwise advised, so we're looking at

180

00:27:39.140 --> 00:27:51.759

Yolanda F. Sonnier: maintaining that 547 case load. Eeoc, I think that was already, shared a few months ago, that any cases that...

181

00:27:52.230 --> 00:28:11.760

Yolanda F. Sonnier: the... one of the bases, dealt with transgender, they were not given any credit, even if there were other bases. So we had some cases where, it may have been transgender, it may have been race, and it may have been disability, and even though we were investigating all of their... all of those bases.

182

00:28:12.120 --> 00:28:16.129

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Because transgender was one of them.

183

00:28:16.280 --> 00:28:21.880

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Eeoc has declined to give any agency credit.

184



00:28:22.090 --> 00:28:27.230

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Based upon the fact that transgender was part of that investigation.

185

00:28:27.630 --> 00:28:46.809

Yolanda F. Sonnier: So, we have internally, pivoted, so when we do have that situation, we will have, there will be two cases that will accompany each other, so we do have... we have made, accommodations internally to address that.

186

00:28:46.810 --> 00:28:54.300

Yolanda F. Sonnier: So, the cases won't be submitted to EEOC that has transgender as one of the bases we investigated.

187

00:28:55.170 --> 00:29:03.319

Yolanda F. Sonnier: the... I think we shared last month that We have several open positions.

188

00:29:03.330 --> 00:29:27.200

Yolanda F. Sonnier: And so we continue... we are continuing to... I was about to say investigate, we continue to interview, but I guess it's sort of an investigation as well, of the candidates, but no, we continue to interview the candidates and hope to have a full team on board for our investigative unit, because I know we have several other

189

00:29:27.380 --> 00:29:38.850

Yolanda F. Sonnier: units here that also are investigating and have vacancies. So, the case processing unit, we have 6 vacancies.

190

00:29:39.270 --> 00:29:44.940

Yolanda F. Sonnier: And so, we... the... The benefit for us

191

00:29:45.640 --> 00:29:59.499

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Not necessarily the candidates, but because of the federal government layoffs, we've had a number of federal employees who are applying for the positions, and the...

192

00:29:59.630 --> 00:30:15.610

Yolanda F. Sonnier: you know, positions are entry-level positions, and, you know, unfortunately, those individuals' time at the federal government got cut short, and so I think that we will benefit in getting all of that talent, to possibly come to the Commission.

193

00:30:16.840 --> 00:30:24.879

Yolanda F. Sonnier: And the only other thing that I have before I open it up for questions is we have... so Baltimore City, during their Civil Rights Week.

194

00:30:25.040 --> 00:30:32.679

Yolanda F. Sonnier: does an annual civil rights breakfast. That breakfast is this Friday at 9 a.m.

195

00:30:32.700 --> 00:30:50.600

Yolanda F. Sonnier: And we have two tickets that we wanted to make available for, any commissioners, if

you would like to attend, you know, to please let me know, send... put it in the chat, so I can make sure to get you the information for that breakfast.

196

00:30:53.010 --> 00:31:04.679

Yolanda F. Sonnier: That is all I have. You've received the case processing data and information, so does anyone have any questions for me before I turn the microphone over?

197

00:31:08.500 --> 00:31:12.150

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Hearing none, is it coming to you, Nicolette?

198

00:31:12.430 --> 00:31:13.460

Nicolette Young: Yes.

199

00:31:13.460 --> 00:31:15.190

Yolanda F. Sonnier: Alrighty, Nikola, take it away.

200

00:31:15.190 --> 00:31:32.990

Nicolette Young: Thank you, Yolanda. Good morning, everyone. I hope that you had a nice, holiday weekend. Both Cleveland and Yolanda, pretty much gave you my entire report, so I'm happy, to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

201

00:31:43.010 --> 00:31:51.660

Eileen Levitt: So, Nicolette, so if the HUD and then potentially EEOC does cut back.

202

00:31:51.990 --> 00:31:56.990

Eileen Levitt: Have you gotten anything from the state as to what they might do?

203

00:31:57.250 --> 00:32:11.310

Nicolette Young: So, no, they... so, actually, right now, the Department of Budget and Management, they have reached out to state agencies to find out what type of impact, will occur in FY26 if we're not able to get reimbursements.

204

00:32:11.310 --> 00:32:22.129

Nicolette Young: This is new territory for pretty much all of us, but they are monitoring the situation, they are engaging with state agencies to find out what type of impacts

205

00:32:22.130 --> 00:32:40.839

Nicolette Young: You know, that could occur in looking at worst-case scenarios. So, I mean, of course, if we're not able to get sufficient funding from our federal partners, we will have to request a deficiency from the state in order for us to be able to maintain our, you know, regular operations.

206

00:32:40.840 --> 00:32:46.669

Nicolette Young: But right now, we're just kind of in a kind of wait-and-see, what happens approach right now.

207

00:32:51.630 --> 00:32:53.150

Eileen Levitt: That's my love.

208

00:32:55.580 --> 00:32:56.609

Cleveland L. Horton II: Whoa, killer.

209

00:32:57.640 --> 00:32:59.939

Cleveland L. Horton II: He had a lot to say.

210

00:33:01.120 --> 00:33:02.520

Yolanda F. Sonnier: A lot to say about that report.

211

00:33:04.760 --> 00:33:05.530

Yolanda F. Sonnier: money.

212

00:33:05.530 --> 00:33:09.839

Nicolette Young: That's right. The exact same way.

213

00:33:09.840 --> 00:33:24.919

Cleveland L. Horton II: The only thing I wanted to... the only thing I wanted to add real briefly to Nicolette's report is, as we mentioned this, last commission meeting, I believe, as well, our RFP, for our building move closes, I believe, on the 23rd.

214

00:33:24.920 --> 00:33:25.550

Nicolette Young: Yes.

215

00:33:25.550 --> 00:33:32.089

Cleveland L. Horton II: So, we should know, Who has submitted,

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00:33:32.110 --> 00:33:50.770

Cleveland L. Horton II: proposals for us to potentially move to. We do anticipate that it still will be in this general vicinity in downtown Baltimore, but we will kind of update you all. The next phase of the next phase of this project will be for us to go out, and look at the sites.

217

00:33:50.770 --> 00:33:59.600

Cleveland L. Horton II: To determine, which one will be, most suitable, for us and for the public to have access to us.

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00:33:59.600 --> 00:34:05.599

Cleveland L. Horton II: So we'll continue to update you all as we go through this process now. I'm also not sure how...

219

00:34:05.840 --> 00:34:23.489

Cleveland L. Horton II: all... with everything that's happening, how the move is going to be... if the move is going to be impacted by that, because of the fiscal impact. So, as soon as we know or get any indication of

either, we will update you all and let you all know that as well.

220

00:34:30.820 --> 00:34:31.260

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: This is...

221

00:34:31.260 --> 00:34:31.860

Nicolette Young: Okay, fair.

222

00:34:31.860 --> 00:34:34.009

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: This is Commissioner Rosen.

223

00:34:35.440 --> 00:34:36.480

Nicolette Young: Yes.

224

00:34:38.179 --> 00:34:47.039

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Yes, thank you. I, I just... it just occurred to me, so... Another large... another... Great issue is that...

225

00:34:47.509 --> 00:34:48.409

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: We can't

226

00:34:51.489 --> 00:34:55.999

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: We can't manage with, with... so with immigration.

227

00:34:59.869 --> 00:35:10.579

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: they... Is there any position on the situation with immigration, with immigrants, with maybe

228

00:35:11.099 --> 00:35:16.699

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: For their rights, for many different things, with communication access, with information access.

229

00:35:16.879 --> 00:35:34.689

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Is there any guidance on that from this... from this office? I'm sorry to go off-topic, because it's just... it occurred to me, because there are a lot of deaf or other disabled individuals who have spoken with me who are afraid of the problem and not really sure of their rights, so...

230

00:35:34.859 --> 00:35:43.289

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Does this office have any... any role in that? I see that Candace has her hand. Maybe she has information on that.

231

00:35:43.500 --> 00:35:52.809

Candice Crenshaw: Yes, I would like to add to the answer to that question. So, our office did collaborate with the Attorney General's office, and we created a Know Your Rights

232

00:35:52.810 --> 00:36:13.699

Candice Crenshaw: booklet, and in the Know Your Rights booklet, in collaboration with the AG's office, there is some guidance on immigration. Our office does not specifically cover immigration. However, we did collaborate with the Attorney General's office, and if you reference the Know Your Rights booklet on our website, then you can see that information. I hope that helps.

233

00:36:17.060 --> 00:36:18.300

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: Yes, thank you.

234

00:36:19.720 --> 00:36:23.650

Nicolette Young: It really... it's, it's a tough... it's because the community...

235

00:36:23.700 --> 00:36:36.060

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: in general, it's just... some... so many people are just afraid, and don't understand what to do, so I appreciate every... every action that we can take. Thank you for that information, Candace. I appreciate that, and that collaboration.

236

00:36:36.650 --> 00:36:38.340

Cleveland L. Horton II: Yeah. So...

237

00:36:38.340 --> 00:36:40.869

ASL Interpreter | Andrew: I wanna... I just wanted to respond to...

238

00:36:41.000 --> 00:36:46.119

Cleveland L. Horton II: Commissioner Suwith had two things in the chat. I don't know if you saw it, Nicolette, but .

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00:36:46.120 --> 00:36:55.969

Nicolette Young: I did. I was gonna answer the first one, and I'll let you all handle the second part. So, to be very honest with you and transparent.

240

00:36:56.670 --> 00:36:59.710

Nicolette Young: Current cost for,

241

00:37:00.480 --> 00:37:11.349

Nicolette Young: Rent is about \$88,000, and that's because we have federal funds. If we were a fully general-funded agency, we would not have to pay the state for any type of rent.

242

00:37:11.350 --> 00:37:29.079

Nicolette Young: But because we do receive a portion of our, of our budget through, other sources, which would include federal funds, we are charged based on that rate. So the current rate is \$88,000 a year, and it goes up, you know, a little bit,

243

00:37:29.080 --> 00:37:45.749

Nicolette Young: with inflation costs each year. Now, in order for us to stay in this area, we have looked out,

you know, once... prior to engaging with the Department of General Services, about, you know, looking for a new space, we did...

244

00:37:45.750 --> 00:38:02.749

Nicolette Young: go out and, you know, get several, quotes. And it's gonna be about between \$400,000 and \$500,000 just to stay in the Baltimore downtown area. So we would need to get additional funds from the state in order to be able to pay

245

00:38:02.910 --> 00:38:06.330

Nicolette Young: That, that difference, in rent.

246

00:38:06.510 --> 00:38:21.309

Nicolette Young: They are aware of this. We have made sure that they understand that we do not have the money to be able to absorb an additional cost like that, so they're gonna have... the state's gonna have to help us if they want us to stay in this area.

247

00:38:21.310 --> 00:38:30.330

Nicolette Young: So, I hope that answers your question. No, it would not be a savings measure. It will cost the state more money for us to actually move

248

00:38:30.330 --> 00:38:40.750

Nicolette Young: to a different location than it would for us to stay where we currently are, which is not an option, I don't believe, at this time, because that movie... that, this building has been sold.

249

00:38:41.070 --> 00:38:45.000

Nicolette Young: And I will let someone take over the next question.

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00:38:45.000 --> 00:39:00.900

Cleveland L. Horton II: And the building... so part of the thought process, at least initially, right, was that this building was so far beyond repair that it was cheaper to sell the building and move the agencies out of the building into other spaces.

251

00:39:00.900 --> 00:39:11.580

Cleveland L. Horton II: than to make all of the necessary repairs that are needed in this building, right? So that was the thought process from the state. So before we signed off on

252

00:39:11.580 --> 00:39:24.849

Cleveland L. Horton II: moving forward with this process, we wanted to be assured that, hey, we can't afford it, right? So, if you're moving us out of this building, we can't afford a \$400,000 increase in our budget.

253

00:39:24.850 --> 00:39:43.809

Cleveland L. Horton II: that we needed some guarantees from the Department of Budget and Management that they would provide the funding to do so. So, the real estate department followed up with Department of Budget and Management and were reassured that they understood our fiscal position, and that they would cover any additional costs related to

254

00:39:43.820 --> 00:39:58.919

Cleveland L. Horton II: shifting us over to, a new location. So, that's kind of where we are with that. And the second one, Madam Chair, in reference to national origin, we are looking at, when we think about immigration, and part of, to Commissioner Rosen's question.

255

00:39:58.920 --> 00:40:10.129

Cleveland L. Horton II: Any issues, obviously, that arise regarding national origin discrimination, we do accept those, and we continue to accept those and move forward, with bringing those complaints into our agency.

256

00:40:12.130 --> 00:40:23.299

Candice Crenshaw: And also, to build on that, when you say events, I'm not sure if you're referencing education and outreach events at all, but in the case that there are any,

257

00:40:23.330 --> 00:40:45.340

Candice Crenshaw: any areas that we don't cover. As mentioned earlier, we do collaborate with other agencies, so that they can help. For example, CASA de Maryland, they visited our office during a Lunch and Learn, so it's possible for us to collaborate with them and provide information about the rights that we cover, as well as them providing information specifically around immigration.

258

00:40:45.340 --> 00:40:48.950

Stephanie Suerth: And that was exactly what I was asking, so thank you for that, I appreciate it.

259

00:40:49.840 --> 00:40:50.680

Candice Crenshaw: Thank you.

260

00:40:53.390 --> 00:40:55.260

Candice Crenshaw: I believe it may be my turn.

261

00:40:56.180 --> 00:40:59.890

Candice Crenshaw: You ain't gonna do it. You ain't gonna do it. Y'all can... y'all can fight about who's gonna go first.

262

00:41:00.780 --> 00:41:04.629

Candice Crenshaw: Ms. G's on mute, so I'll go ahead and let Ms. G take it home after.

263

00:41:04.770 --> 00:41:18.759

Candice Crenshaw: So, hello, happy Tuesday, everyone. You all have received my report. I do want to highlight that I mistakenly left out 3 trainings, and I just want to highlight that, for you all to know that we were very busy, and productive.

264

00:41:18.940 --> 00:41:42.569

Candice Crenshaw: But with that being stated, I want to also highlight how our... one of our main focuses right now, for our agency around education and outreach is collaboration, collaboration. So I do want to thank Commissioner Prescott. We connected and met about ensuring that our agency is informing small businesses about their civil rights and how that coincides with everything that

265

00:41:42.570 --> 00:42:07.459

Candice Crenshaw: we have to offer as well. So, Commissioner Prescott has connected me with a few small business entities so that our agency, our Education Outreach Unit, can provide training and guidance for those small businesses. So, we look forward to just expanding our outreach efforts so that small businesses are aware of their civil rights and how we can help them, and to ensure that they are in compliance

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00:42:08.980 --> 00:42:19.570

Candice Crenshaw: around, you know, around our laws. So we've also, education and outreach, we've also been collaborating with community colleges and universities. For example, we've...

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00:42:19.570 --> 00:42:35.010

Candice Crenshaw: We've given a presentation to Frostburg State University. We'll be going back out there next week, and also we met with Anne Arundel County Community College today. So we have been meeting with these colleges, to ensure that we're providing Know Your Rights

268

00:42:35.010 --> 00:42:51.319

Candice Crenshaw: courses for their students, so it collaborates with their majors as well. With Anne Arundel County Community College, we're collaborating with one of their civil rights classes. So, due to the fact that we're collaborating, they have money in their budget so that we can also do a list

269

00:42:51.440 --> 00:43:15.869

Candice Crenshaw: also host a listening session, to get the community out and see what's going on. So, again, we have just been really big on collaboration. This weekend, we will be hosting a community day with Baltimore City Office of Equity and Human Rights, and we also were able to get individuals out that are able to sign individuals up to be able to vote. So, we'll be having voter registration.

270

00:43:15.870 --> 00:43:39.399

Candice Crenshaw: Again, that is not specifically under MCCR, but we did connect with another agency so that we can help provide this resource. So, we're really focused on collaboration so that we can continue to enhance and expand our outreach so that other agencies and individuals are aware, because people are still unaware of Title 19 and Title 20 laws. People are still unaware

271

00:43:39.400 --> 00:43:51.819

Candice Crenshaw: of who to call to file a complaint. So, we are just really focusing on our outreach and collaboration. That is my report. If anyone has any questions for me, now is the time.

272

00:43:57.850 --> 00:44:03.629

Candice Crenshaw: Also, you will receive an email this week about Winterfest details. Thank you.

273

00:44:06.110 --> 00:44:07.090

Glendora Hughes: Okay.

274

00:44:07.550 --> 00:44:14.289

Glendora Hughes: Good morning, everyone. Just, you have my reports, so I won't go through them.

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00:44:14.820 --> 00:44:19.970



Glendora Hughes: I do want to highlight a few things,

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00:44:20.120 --> 00:44:24.109

Glendora Hughes: One, getting back to the issue involving the...

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00:44:25.270 --> 00:44:29.019

Glendora Hughes: The various shiftings in the... at the federal level.

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00:44:29.510 --> 00:44:32.570

Glendora Hughes: There is an organization that.

279

00:44:33.070 --> 00:44:50.100

Glendora Hughes: was, that I participated in with this work group, their Cross State Civil Rights Agency Enforcement Working Group. And this work group came into being, the first, Trump administration, 45. And, that.

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00:44:50.520 --> 00:44:57.960

Glendora Hughes: was to file suit against EEOC when they were blocking access to EEO1 data.

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00:44:58.740 --> 00:45:10.390

Glendora Hughes: And that, the... originally, agencies could get that A01 data on any employer to assess whether there was a

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00:45:10.610 --> 00:45:14.990

Glendora Hughes: Disparate impact or a,

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00:45:15.160 --> 00:45:21.450

Glendora Hughes: More like a commission-like action, where it's more than just the individual. And they had,

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00:45:22.000 --> 00:45:33.779

Glendora Hughes: basically shut off FAP agencies from being able to access that data with only... unless you only... you could have access for a particular respondent.

285

00:45:35.440 --> 00:45:47.390

Glendora Hughes: And so this group came together, because California was going to file a suit against them for that data, and, reached out to, about 5 different.

286

00:45:47.850 --> 00:45:55.410

Glendora Hughes: FAP, agencies, to be able to sign on as amicus

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00:45:55.590 --> 00:46:03.580

Glendora Hughes: file amicus brief, and we were one of the sign-ons, for that amicus brief when they sued EEOC.

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00:46:05.010 --> 00:46:20.730

Glendora Hughes: what is also happening, and some of the discussion at the Legal Defense Funds Conference, was that EEOC is, the... the administration is planning on not collecting that data any further.

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00:46:20.920 --> 00:46:29.669

Glendora Hughes: So that E01 data will become a situation where it's not going to be updated, the data is not going to be collected.

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00:46:29.750 --> 00:46:45.279

Glendora Hughes: And it won't be of use, and that impacts being able to bring systemic actions, and also it's an attack on the disparate impact theory, which they want to basically eliminate, and that was also part of the discussion.

291

00:46:45.280 --> 00:46:52.610

Glendora Hughes: Is the attack on the disparate impact theory, which allows you to bring larger cases against

292

00:46:52.610 --> 00:47:02.689

Glendora Hughes: institutions where the policy is neutral, but the impact is discriminatory. And that... that is under attack as well.

293

00:47:02.770 --> 00:47:07.780

Glendora Hughes: This group is now looking at Potentially, another...

294

00:47:09.750 --> 00:47:26.379

Glendora Hughes: possibility of, of, of a lawsuit, but also talking, finding out where, if, the agencies are. There were about 10 agencies on the call, including, I think, the EEOC, former EOC chair, chair, Jenny,

295

00:47:26.520 --> 00:47:32.939

Glendora Hughes: Yang was on the call, and, there is discussion about

296

00:47:33.630 --> 00:47:46.790

Glendora Hughes: how they're going to deal with these issues. And the agencies, some of these agencies are different... in different postures. Some have basically said they're going to give up their HUD contracts because they refuse to

297

00:47:47.000 --> 00:47:53.160

Glendora Hughes: engage. Those are the agencies that probably have more funding from their state.

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00:47:53.240 --> 00:48:11.160

Glendora Hughes: that fully funds them more, and HUD... the HUD contract is just a small percentage, and they have that option. And then you have agencies like ourselves, and I think, like DC, who have a significant portion of the budget that's funded by

299

00:48:11.370 --> 00:48:20.480

Glendora Hughes: the HUD contract. So, there is discussion about how, collectively, to address this problem.

300  
00:48:20.800 --> 00:48:27.519  
Glendora Hughes: And looking at, in terms of what Options are available.

301  
00:48:27.760 --> 00:48:34.839  
Glendora Hughes: In terms of challenging it, one is you gotta wait till it actually happens. Is there harm to be done?

302  
00:48:35.010 --> 00:48:37.700  
Glendora Hughes: And then you have, the...

303  
00:48:37.950 --> 00:48:41.819  
Glendora Hughes: Similarly, the Attorney Generals are looking

304  
00:48:42.020 --> 00:48:45.089  
Glendora Hughes: And, at the issue as well.

305  
00:48:45.170 --> 00:48:55.259  
Glendora Hughes: to potentially bring up a class suit on behalf of FAPS. And then you have, nationally, you have some organizations

306  
00:48:55.300 --> 00:49:08.579  
Glendora Hughes: Like the National Fair Housing Alliance, whose impact by their funds being cut, and now they're looking at the HUD, state local agencies' funds being cut, which basically wipes out

307  
00:49:08.900 --> 00:49:21.580  
Glendora Hughes: the attempt to wipe out any responsibility or any addressing of discrimination in housing, and so I do have a call with a couple of attorneys from that

308  
00:49:22.340 --> 00:49:30.350  
Glendora Hughes: that help, that was helping, and has... and is helping, the National Fair Housing Alliance about what their thoughts are, and

309  
00:49:30.480 --> 00:49:40.040  
Glendora Hughes: Strategies on, potentially, litigation to challenge the irregularities.

310  
00:49:40.350 --> 00:49:56.789  
Glendora Hughes: One of the things you talked about is that the memo itself is inconsistent, and it says May, and then it says we're going to do this, and then it says it's going to do that, and so part of it is to,

311  
00:49:56.940 --> 00:49:58.790  
Glendora Hughes: Look at exactly

312  
00:49:59.890 --> 00:50:11.240

Glendora Hughes: what are they dangling? And then what makes it so unsettling in terms of strategy-wise is that you have this shutdown, and there's nobody there to talk to.

313

00:50:11.280 --> 00:50:20.200

Glendora Hughes: And so you're trying to plan in anticipation of what will happen, and then you see an article that says that.

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00:50:20.440 --> 00:50:33.040

Glendora Hughes: Among the number of agencies that the administration said, well, we're gonna fire them all, and we're gonna lay them off, you see this huge number of folks that have been,

315

00:50:33.230 --> 00:50:42.399

Glendora Hughes: that they have, sent letters to fire or to lay off in the Fair Housing Equal Opportunity Division of HUD, so...

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00:50:42.570 --> 00:51:02.170

Glendora Hughes: A lot of this is real-time movement, but there are folks that are gearing up to challenge this and not accept it as this is the way it should be. The idea, as we've seen on the litigation field, is that

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00:51:02.750 --> 00:51:06.739

Glendora Hughes: Suits are being won in the... in the lower courts.

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00:51:07.240 --> 00:51:16.000

Glendora Hughes: There be, and when those executive orders and those illegal, executive policies have been challenged.

319

00:51:16.570 --> 00:51:22.820

Glendora Hughes: And part of it is just to see if people don't challenge them, and then they can just keep going forward.

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00:51:22.960 --> 00:51:30.409

Glendora Hughes: But the, groups are gearing up to challenge these, issues, and particularly this memo.

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00:51:30.590 --> 00:51:41.180

Glendora Hughes: Because it does have a significant impact on, the, enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, which basically they don't want to enforce.

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00:51:42.660 --> 00:51:44.360

Glendora Hughes: That is, you know.

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00:51:44.550 --> 00:51:50.060

Glendora Hughes: in a nutshell, my highlights, and if you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer.

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00:51:54.920 --> 00:51:55.850

Glendora Hughes: Thank you.

325

00:52:01.660 --> 00:52:08.350

Cleveland L. Horton II: Madam President, that is all of the staff reports. I will turn it back over to you.

326

00:52:14.820 --> 00:52:23.289

Stephanie Suerth: Thank you very much. Okay, I want to open it up, and I apologize, everyone, I've been... it's been one of those days, I'm sure everyone understands.

327

00:52:23.630 --> 00:52:31.449

Stephanie Suerth: And has had them themselves. I want to open it up for any follow-up questions from the commissioners before we move on to new business.

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00:52:37.160 --> 00:52:49.259

Stephanie Suerth: Hearing none, new business. One of the things I wanted to get everyone to opine on, since we're here, is setting the date for next month's meeting, since our date was scheduled to be on a federal holiday.

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00:52:49.970 --> 00:52:58.500

Stephanie Suerth: Has everybody responded to the poll, and or can everyone please let me know your availability? It's looking like the Friday date, and...

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00:52:59.120 --> 00:53:04.279

Stephanie Suerth: Please correct me if I'm wrong, but it's looking like the Friday date might be the one with the most availability.

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00:53:09.860 --> 00:53:11.720

Kimberly Prescott: Which Friday? I'm sorry.

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00:53:11.980 --> 00:53:18.830

Stephanie Suerth: It is the Friday of the same week that our meeting would normally be, I believe. Hold on, let me go back and find it for you, I'm sorry.

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00:53:19.780 --> 00:53:23.640

Angela J. Scott: I don't think I got, or I didn't see the poll.

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00:53:23.920 --> 00:53:28.000

Kimberly Prescott: Yeah, I don't think I did either. I didn't know this was a conversation.

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00:53:28.420 --> 00:53:35.740

Stephanie Suerth: Yeah, Spencer, I believe, I thought, had sent it around. Yeah, rescheduling the November meeting.

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00:53:36.170 --> 00:53:48.410

Stephanie Suerth: It was sent to the commissioners, and what we're trying to do is... Jimmy Sykes, you're coming. Either Thursday the 13th, 10 to 12, or Friday the 14th from 10 to 12.

337

00:53:49.100 --> 00:53:49.890

Stephanie Suerth: Okay.

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00:53:50.520 --> 00:53:54.519

Kimberly Prescott: I can't do either one. Eileen says the 14th, the 14th works for me.

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00:53:56.360 --> 00:54:01.429

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: If anybody has a conflict with that, please just let them know, otherwise we'll go ahead and schedule it.

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00:54:02.490 --> 00:54:05.929

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Yeah, I'm gonna be out that week, but if you guys need to go ahead...

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00:54:06.320 --> 00:54:13.549

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: You know, it's not possible for everyone to be available, but I'm not gonna be in that week, so...

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00:54:13.840 --> 00:54:14.670

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Yeah.

343

00:54:14.780 --> 00:54:17.159

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: If you guys need to do it without me, I understand.

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00:54:18.530 --> 00:54:19.400

Stephanie Suerth: Thank you.

345

00:54:19.690 --> 00:54:24.640

Stephanie Suerth: We're just trying to be respectful of the holiday.

346

00:54:27.810 --> 00:54:28.600

Stephanie Suerth: Great.

347

00:54:28.600 --> 00:54:30.420

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: I do have a question.

348

00:54:30.640 --> 00:54:31.300

Stephanie Suerth: Yes.

349

00:54:32.650 --> 00:54:40.290

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: So, kid... I sent, one moment for clarification.

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00:54:40.870 --> 00:54:55.289

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Stephanie, I sent you a private message. Can you just make sure that you read that? It was just a question that I wanted to... to ask, but I didn't want to put it to the General Commission here. But with, the staff information there.

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00:54:55.950 --> 00:55:10.670

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: I appreciate the monthly meetings, but I'm trying to understand if it's a requirement by the rules that we do have a monthly meeting? Okay, alright, I see there with the response there. Okay, so...

352

00:55:10.670 --> 00:55:22.949

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Two reasons why I was asking that was, first of all, we want to make sure that the staff has time to use, things successfully. You know, obviously respect the staff's time. And maybe we have different schedules.

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00:55:22.950 --> 00:55:28.430

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: And we can help with the commission and make sure that things are done regularly. In the past.

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00:55:28.430 --> 00:55:53.349

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: the commission was so heavily reliant on doing work for MCCR, and I understand that that was previously, but now the staff, you know, almost all of the work is done outside of that. So I just wanted to make sure, for me, that the Commission with the, you know, if we needed to have a quarterly meeting, or, you know, whatever the reason was that we needed to get together, but obviously to be respectful.

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00:55:53.350 --> 00:56:06.810

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: of the information that we collect monthly, and if there's any feedback needed or, you know, time requirements for us to prepare things, it can be a lot of work for the staff to get that ready. So, yeah, I do understand that part also.

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00:56:06.950 --> 00:56:18.739

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Also, requirements with some changes, you know, now's a good time to change anything, right? But I wanted to make sure that, we can see

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00:56:18.740 --> 00:56:30.130

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: the evolution of things as they're changing. We see there's a lot of things going on with the Commission, running the staff, running offices, running meetings.

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00:56:30.130 --> 00:56:38.249

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: So, in reality, yeah, I understand. So... For the future?

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00:56:38.470 --> 00:56:42.899

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: You know, I do understand that this can be time-consuming, but thank you.

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00:56:42.900 --> 00:56:55.229

Stephanie Suerth: Absolutely, and I'm hoping, really, as the Commission goes through that strategic planning, that we return to the Commissioners being more involved in the efforts

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00:56:55.900 --> 00:57:03.449

Stephanie Suerth: and the work, obviously we can't process cases, but at the same time, you know, we've... at least I've tried to...

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00:57:03.470 --> 00:57:17.099

Stephanie Suerth: echo that we need to be participatory in the events and, you know, be there for them, and I'm hoping that this process will give us, you know, more opportunities for that, and for us to be meaningful outside of

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00:57:17.100 --> 00:57:30.790

Stephanie Suerth: just sort of, as you said, the monthly updates, and then also, you know, our legislative review process, which is a lot more interactive. So, 100%. But it is mandated, it is required.

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00:57:30.880 --> 00:57:45.980

Stephanie Suerth: So, we will continue to have the monthly meetings. I think we can skip one or two a year, which is why we don't meet... I think it's August in the summer, and then, there's that ability to have one that if we need to, we can cancel it.

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00:57:48.290 --> 00:58:02.379

ASL Interpreter-Courtney: Absolutely, yeah, thank you for that, I appreciate it. So, I have to jump off for another meeting, but thank you so much, everyone, the staff, for all the great work that you're doing, and yeah, I remain hopeful. I know it's a challenging time, but thank you for all your hard work.

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00:58:02.560 --> 00:58:03.480

Stephanie Suerth: Thank you.

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00:58:05.570 --> 00:58:09.070

Stephanie Suerth: And then, as I mentioned, the strategic planning.

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00:58:09.190 --> 00:58:15.619

Stephanie Suerth: So, as it moves forward, there will be opportunities for the commissioners to participate.

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00:58:16.420 --> 00:58:23.219

Stephanie Suerth: Kimberly, Commissioner Prescott has already participated in one of the meetings. Thank you, appreciate your time and your...

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00:58:23.220 --> 00:58:36.969

Stephanie Suerth: your feedback and your thoughts. So, as we move forward, there'll be different opportunities. I want to make sure, inasmuch as possible, as many voices is being heard from the Commission as possible. So, if I reach out, that is why.

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00:58:37.180 --> 00:58:44.330

Stephanie Suerth: And we'll continue to move forward to make sure that we're working collaboratively towards the future that all of us want for the Commission.



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00:58:46.850 --> 00:58:49.210

Stephanie Suerth: Is there any other new business?

373

00:58:52.690 --> 00:59:04.080

Cleveland L. Horton II: Madam President, I just wanted to... I know Candace indicated that there will be an email going out later today about Winterfest. I just wanted to make sure that you all are aware of the date.

374

00:59:04.110 --> 00:59:16.900

Cleveland L. Horton II: that it is December the 9th, we felt like we could kind of kill two birds with one stone in reference to having the commission meeting in person, and then shifting to the Winterfest. So our December 9th meeting

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00:59:17.140 --> 00:59:28.850

Cleveland L. Horton II: We'll be in person at the Commission, and then we'll rotate into... shift into our Winterfest, shortly thereafter, after the Commission meeting on December the 9th.

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00:59:29.260 --> 00:59:33.709

Cleveland L. Horton II: So, I just wanted to let you all know, so you all could mark your calendars.

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00:59:33.880 --> 00:59:42.000

Cleveland L. Horton II: Make yourselves available, and we'd love to see you all in person on December the 9th.

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00:59:42.770 --> 00:59:53.949

Stephanie Suerth: Thank you for that, and I just made sure I updated my calendar for that. For those that have participated in the past, you know it's an amazing time, it's a great time to be able to connect with the staff.

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00:59:54.030 --> 01:00:14.220

Stephanie Suerth: To have a celebration, to celebrate them, and to show our appreciation for everything that they do. It is a great opportunity also to interact with one another as commissioners in person. So, I hope everybody who is able will make the opportunity to get downtown. I know that sometimes can be challenging.

380

01:00:14.220 --> 01:00:15.930

Stephanie Suerth: And be participatory.

381

01:00:16.200 --> 01:00:25.410

Stephanie Suerth: And then at that meeting, we can determine how we want to move forward with some of our live meetings. I know we haven't had one since March, but I'd like to make that

382

01:00:27.260 --> 01:00:43.860

Stephanie Suerth: a quarterly event. It would be hybrid, because as everybody knows, my biggest thing has been, and will continue to be, we need to try to get more participation from the public, and I think having the opportunity for people to participate virtually is really important since our meetings are during the day.

383  
01:00:45.720 --> 01:00:47.690  
Stephanie Suerth: Any questions, concerns?

384  
01:00:51.880 --> 01:00:56.230  
Stephanie Suerth: And thank you, everyone, for your patience. I apologize for being late.

385  
01:00:56.500 --> 01:01:01.760  
Stephanie Suerth: And then, if there is no other new business, do we need an executive session today?

386  
01:01:05.000 --> 01:01:06.849  
Stephanie Suerth: Glendora, you're muted, I'm sorry.

387  
01:01:08.040 --> 01:01:10.500  
Glendora Hughes: No, we don't need an executive session.

388  
01:01:11.100 --> 01:01:11.770  
Stephanie Suerth: Right?

389  
01:01:12.110 --> 01:01:15.410  
Stephanie Suerth: Well, if that's the case, I will give everybody back an hour.

390  
01:01:15.530 --> 01:01:17.509  
Stephanie Suerth: Do I have a motion to adjourn?

391  
01:01:18.440 --> 01:01:19.870  
Gina McKnight-Smith: I move for adjournment.

392  
01:01:21.310 --> 01:01:22.290  
Angela J. Scott: Second.

393  
01:01:23.050 --> 01:01:24.120  
Stephanie Suerth: All in favor?

394  
01:01:24.870 --> 01:01:25.630  
Angela J. Scott: Aye.

395  
01:01:26.220 --> 01:01:39.890  
Stephanie Suerth: Excellent. Everybody, please enjoy your week. We'll talk next month. Like I said, if anybody has any questions or concerns about scheduling it for Friday, please let me know so that we can take that into account. Otherwise, I will ask for an updated meeting invite.

396  
01:01:41.350 --> 01:01:42.899  
Nicolette Young: Everybody have a great day.

397

01:01:42.900 --> 01:01:43.940

Glendora Hughes: Thank you!

398

01:01:44.770 --> 01:01:45.360

Glendora Hughes: Bye.

399

01:01:45.360 --> 01:01:45.950

Stephanie Suerth: Bye.