



Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes

COMMISSION ON DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES MEETING MINUTES APRIL 16, 2024

On April 16 at 4:00p.m., the Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes (CDHC) held a remote meeting pursuant to applicable law.

I. Call to Order

Chair James Bennett called the meeting to order.

II. Roll Call

Executive Assistant Jayden Epps conducted roll call to establish a quorum, as reflected below.

The following commissioners were present:

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| • Bennett | • Noriega |
| • Buys | • Pai |
| • Davis | • Rosensweig |
| • Kano | • Sayeed |
| • Kelly | • Sweis |
| • Limmer | • Uhe-Edmonds |
| • Meek | |

The following commissioners were absent:

- Bahena
- Banerji
- Goldenberg
- Parker
- Tamley

III. Approval of Minutes

On a motion from Comm'r Kano and a second from Comm'r Limmer the minutes of the March 21, 2024, meeting of the Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes were approved.

IV. Chair's Report

Bennett acknowledged the efforts of IDHR staff who are working to get the Helpline started.

Bennett announced new staff who joined IDHR:

- Addie Shrodes will be the new External Affairs PIO starting May 1. Addie and the Outreach Team, comprised of Oscar Briseno and Irma Lopez, will assist the commission with developing opportunities to be visible throughout the summer at various festivities statewide.

CDHC offered a legislative briefing hosted by Illinois Speaker of the House, Chris Welch, in the Capitol. Twenty legislators attended. Thanks to Comm'rs Davis and Limmer, who participated.

Bennett also thanked Comm'r Sweis for leading an IDHR presentation in honor of Arab American month.

Bennett encouraged all to share with the commission information about any achievements or honors that they receive.

Sweis announced that she is the recipient for this year's Vanguard award given by the Chicago Bar Association.

Bennett reminded everyone to submit their Statements of Economic Interest by the May 1 deadline. There are two items that commissioners need to comply with. They should contact Bennett and Betsey Madden if they have any questions.

V. Helpline Update

Executive Director Kahn announced that CDHC has contracted with the Chicago Lighthouse social service agency. Chicago Lighthouse has hired call specialists, and their training for the helpline has started. The training manual covers multiple areas surrounding trauma, abuse, etc., as well as how to provide callers with referrals. Training is a two-week program. The helpline will be soft launched on April 29. From May 1st until the full launch in fall, the team will continue to provide updates about the progress of the helpline and work toward full press promotion.

Kahn announced that the helpline team is working to develop an intergovernmental agreement with the Institute for Health Care Design Delivery at the University of Illinois-Chicago. This agreement will enlist the Institute to assist the helpline team with the following:

- 1) Review the service model and recommend improvements, including how data is collected,
- 2) Develop plans for a partner network and referral network,
- 3) Build an outreach and engagement strategy, and
- 4) Develop brand identity and marketing/campaign collateral and plans.

In fleshing out the helpline's referral network, Kahn explained that IDHR/CDHC is exploring how to contract to have access to a fuller listing of resources. There have been exploratory conversations with DHS, which is the lead department for 211-Illinois. Without such a contract, the helpline team has created a referral listing that includes statewide, regional, and local organizations. Kahn stated she will share a copy of the referral list with the commissioners and encouraged them to submit additional suggestions of organizations to add.

VI. Committee Reports

Understanding Hate Committee

Sweis gave an update on the last meeting that was held on March 14. The committee is trying to decide on a recurring meeting schedule. At the last meeting, the committee continued mapping resources for people affected by hate. The next program will be May 2, during a CDHC meeting at noon-1 p.m. It will feature journalist Amanda Ripley, author of "High Conflict." She asked that commissioners share the event flyer.

Kano inquired if an RSVP is needed for the Ripley event. Sweis responded that the event can be streamed live. Bennett shared that it will be on Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Comm'r Noriega asked about the difference between watching the event live on Facebook or YouTube versus the Webex. Bennett advised that accessing the event via Facebook or YouTube does not require a password to view it.

Limmer asked about a chance for people who attend via Webex to ask their own questions in some moderated fashion. Bennett replied yes and advised commissioners to join via Webex if they want to ask questions. Kahn responded that commissioners who join the Webex will have time set aside to ask questions.

Resource Network Committee

Noriega shared that CDHC/IDHR, along with the Illinois State Police and a few other agencies and organizations, have held several listening sessions in various communities, so far, the Muslim and Asian communities. The next target session will be the African American community.

Noriega stated they have upcoming meetings to further discuss. She encouraged anyone who has ideas to contact and share them with her committee.

In response to questions, Noriega clarified that the purpose of the listening sessions is to better understand what different communities are facing regarding hate and to educate about rights and services.

Legal Committee

Comm'r Buys stated the committee continues to review legislation and give feedback. They have not proposed any new legislation. They have discussed what it means for the CDHC to support legislation.

The committee continues to talk about "closing the sentencing loophole" that requires offenders to enroll in educational programs, though no such programs exist. The committee is researching options.

Buys stated the committee is losing their intern, Alexis, who is going to graduate from SIU in three weeks. They hope to find another law student to assist with their research.

Buys said that the committee hopes to invite more guest speakers, hopes to offer more training for lawmakers, and will reexamine legislative proposals that did not move forward.

Comm'r Meek clarified that the community service requirement for hate crime offenders is a minimum of 200 hours. Probation or discharge will require enrollment in an educational program. There is no requirement for the number of hours of the educational program, but it is required to be in person and must be specific to the protected class.

Racism Free Schools Update

Comm'r Uhe-Edmonds reported on the developing Racism Free Schools training:

- IDHR, in partnership with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is nearing the finish line in developing a draft model training program for institutions of elementary and secondary education in compliance with SB90, the Racism Free Schools Act.
- The model training will focus on the prevention of and response to incidents of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, and national origin.

- This program will be made available to educational institutions and to the public online at no cost. Educational institutions will be able to access the training module through the Ed Leaders Network.
- The model training program will be delivered through 4 modules, which will take teachers and administrators approximately 90 minutes to complete. The main modules (2 and 3) consist of: defining/identifying key terms centered around race and racism; a scenario that illustrates major concepts; analysis of action one can take (compliance); and some form of assessment.
- The Design Team is, now, working weekly with the Ed Leaders Network to develop testimonials to maximize education stakeholder engagement.

PART II

- IDHR is developing an FAQ on Discrimination and Harassment for Institutions of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with education stakeholders. A list of questions has been generated and answers are being drafted.
- IDHR is researching the feasibility of introducing a brochure(s) on Discrimination and Harassment in Institutions of Elementary and Secondary Education as a supplemental resource.
- IDHR will, soon, begin the development of an informational landing page containing information and resources for stakeholders of elementary and secondary education in navigating IDHR services.

VII. Legislative Update

Comm'r Rosensweig and Buys discussed the various bills that have included IDHR involvement:

Senator Johnson's bill focusing on hate symbols of white supremacy. It is still unclear if the bill will be passed. The commissioners did not take a formal stance on the bill but did offer some suggested changes.

A bill requiring hate crimes training for law enforcement. This was sponsored by ADL and based on CDHC's 2022 recommendation. The training will be for new recruits as well as part of the in-service training.

There are two bills that amend the Human Rights Act. One relates to reproductive health decisions protection bill, which demands a creation of a new protected class based on reproductive health decisions passed the house, and it is expected to pass the senate soon. The other is a package of amendments that IDHR ran jointly with the Attorney General's office.

Rosensweig shared a related issue: He has received inquiries about non-state communities (Romani and Moorish) that feel they are not covered in the state's list of protected classes. Those identities are likely covered under ancestry. There are opportunities to help educate people in these communities about their rights.

Rosensweig is working on administering state funds to the Mobile Museum of Tolerance. Funds were allocated in the state budget and IDHR is the administering agency. As part of that relationship, we have asked for an additional workshop specifically focused on Illinois civil rights history. If anyone is interested in helping, please let him know.

VIII. Strategic Focus Document

Bennett suggested that commissioners review the Strategic Focus for 2024, which is a guiding document. He advised they will conduct a formal vote on its approval at the next meeting in June. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the focus reflects the commission's intent.

On a motion from Buys and a second from Noriega, the committee agreed to review the Strategic Focus document.

Suggestions and comments are as follows:

- The helpline is about developing data and responding, rather than preventative.
- Adjust Section 1 to reflect that the commission is already being proactive and engaging with communities that feel threatened. They are already sharing resources and responding to hate. This should be elevated to a bullet point.
- Listening should precede educating; some communities deal regularly with hate and are accustomed to it.

IX. Public Comment

Bennett opened the floor for public comments. There were no comments from the public.

Kahn advised the commissioners to share any events of interest or their organization's events moving forward.

Sweis announced the launch of the First National Arab American Bar Association, which will take place in Chicago on April 25.

X. Adjournment

Noriega motioned to adjourn. Kano seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.