

**MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
Monday, June 1, 2015  
Arab American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Avenue  
Dearborn, MI

**MINUTES**

PRESENT: Commission Chair Arthur Horwitz  
Commission Vice Chair Rasha Demashkieh  
Commission Secretary Agustin Arbulu  
Commissioner Mumtaz Haque  
Commissioner Deloris Hunt  
Commissioner Ricardo Resio  
Commissioner Linda Lee Tarver  
Commissioner Brad Voss

*The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Horwitz at 5:10 p.m.*

I. WELCOME

Commission Chair Horwitz called the meeting to order, provided welcoming remarks, and introduced the Host and Executive Director of ACCESS, Hassan Jaber, who also brought welcoming remarks. 2015 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arab American National Museum.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Demashkieh) and supported (Commissioner Arbulu), the meeting agenda and the consent agenda were approved as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MIINUTES FROM JUNE 1, 2015

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Demashkieh) and supported (Commissioner Arbulu), the meeting Minutes from the June 1, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. DIVISION REPORTS

Director's Report, Matthew Wesaw – Director Wesaw introduced the new Director of the Division on Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH), Anne Urasky, and reported that the Division is now fully staffed; spoke briefly about the creation and first meeting of the Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing Caucus; with regards to the budgeted action plan, MDCR is tracking 45 bills in the legislature; Governor Snyder has indicated special interest in the work of the ALPACT coalitions, and

increasing the number of migrant and seasonal farm workers as the State of Michigan currently does not have enough MSFWs; newly hired MDCE and DODDBHH Staff includes Karmisha McBeth, Departmental Technician, Lisa Drake, Graphic Designer, Frieda Bennett-White, Secretary, Cara DiGiovanni, DODDBHH Rights Representative; the All-Agency planning is complete and ready for June 8 and 9.

Commissioner Tarver requested an update on “Pipeline to Prison” from Lee Gonzales, to be sent to all of the Commissioners; Commissioner Arbulu requested that the Commission invite the new MDE Superintendent Brian Whiston to a future meeting to discuss the Civil Rights Curriculum.

Budget Update/Public Affairs Report, Leslee Fritz – Ms. Fritz indicated that the budget process has moved quickly compared to years past, approximately one week from conclusion; target agreements have been set, conference committees have met, and conference reports from each of the departments have been adopted. MDCR has remained at the Governor’s recommended level throughout the process, and will be reduced in the next fiscal year by ~\$500K as compared to the current fiscal year. The budget development for the 2017 fiscal year will begin in August 2015. Public Affairs update: Ms. Fritz distributed embargoed copies of the Leadership Collaborative Report on the economic impact of disparities entitled: The High Cost of Disparities. The report will be rolled-out and released to the public tomorrow morning at a breakfast in Grand Rapids (speakers include Mike Finney and representatives from Talent 2025). Next steps include members of the Leadership Collaborative to meet one-on-one with partners from the business community, healthcare, and education to develop a plan of action in the West Michigan region. Spoke briefly about the results and data captured through the Employee Engagement Survey, the upcoming All-Agency Meeting, and the increased media attention around the work of Michigan’s ALPACT coalitions as they relate to police and community relations around the country. Three new ALPACTs will be launched this summer in Jackson, Kalamazoo and Holland.

Commissioner Hunt requested that the comments from the Employee Engagement Survey be provided for the Commission.

## V. COMMISSION MATTERS

Chairman’s Report, Commissioner Horwitz - Thanked the staff and volunteers at the AANM for their hospitality, and thanked Commission Vice Chair Demashkieh and Shawn Sanford for their work in coordinating today’s meeting. Chair Horwitz also spoke on accomplishments by the Commission and the Department including the adoption of the model ordinance template, improving the Civil Rights Curriculum in Michigan schools, adopting the resolution by the Youth Academy, and the efforts of the Anti-Bullying Initiative.

Attorney General’s Report, Ron Robinson – Mr. Robinson introduced the AG Office student interns: Christine Thompson (University of Detroit Mercy Law School),

Christina Thiesen (University of Detroit Mercy Law School), Moses El-Sayed (MSU College of Law), Jessica Soblesky (WSU Law School). Mr. Robinson also reported briefly on today's favorable ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court on the case regarding restrictions on the hijab in employment where religious discrimination was found, 8-1 ruling. He will provide a copy of the case for the Commissioners, as requested by Commissioners Tarver and Arbulu, as well as a synopsis of the Court's opinion, as requested by Commissioner Demashkieh. Regarding the Countryside Townhouses case, the request for Application for Leave to Appeal was filed timely on May 4, 2015 – a response is expected within the next month. Commissioner Arbulu requested a copy of the application as well as a copy of the response. On the *Barash v. SMART* case, the Commission's work is completed, the Commission's decision has been upheld, and now the attorney fees will be determined.

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

Creation of Committees and Mission Statements - At the March 23, 2015 meeting, the Commission unanimously agreed to the creation of four committees to advise and provide recommendations to the commission in its work, and that missions be established for each committee: Budget and Finance, African-American Affairs, Communications and Outreach, and Legislative and Executive Liaison. Mission Statements were proposed to the Commissioners in the meeting packets.

### **MOTION: To adopt/approve the Committee Mission Statements.**

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Arbulu) and supported (Commissioner Tarver), the Committee Mission Statements were adopted/approved by the Commission.  
*Motion carried unanimously.*

Model Ordinance Update, including status of HB 4052, Religious Freedom Restoration Act - Lee Gonzales provided an update on the model ordinance, the status of HB 4052. HB 4052 has passed the House and has been referred to the Senate, to the Michigan Competitiveness Committee. The Department has taken a position on the bill, Leslee Fritz in consultation with Dan Levy prepared testimony that was not presented due to time constraints, but was added to the record. Mr. Gonzales will provide the Commission with a link for the committee and the minutes. Commissioner Arbulu recommended that the Senate be provided with a written position of our support for the amendment and changes made. Mr. Gonzales confirmed that the Senate will receive the prepared testimony that is on record with the House.

Mr. Gonzales also indicated that Michigan Competitiveness Workforce Coalition, headed by the ACLU and other significant partners; many business entities across the State that support this effort. Their purpose is to expand the ELCRA by securing protections for Michigan's LGBT Community in the areas of housing, public accommodations and employment.

Mr. Gonzales also reported on two additional bills that allow faith-based adoption agencies to refuse service to same-sex or unmarried couples who violate the agency's religious beliefs, without fear of losing state funding. These bills have been passed in the House, they've been through the Committee and the Senate, and are awaiting further action on the Senate floor.

Commissioner Tarver and Chair Horwitz clarified that the creation of the Legislative and Executive Committee will serve as a mechanism for the Commission taking a position on legislation.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

Self-governance guidelines for Commission Meetings, Commissioner Horwitz

**MOTION: To adopt/approve the self-governance guidelines for Commission meetings as proposed.**

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Arbulu), the Commission approved the self-governance guidelines as proposed. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Take on Hate Campaign Presentation  
Rana Abbas, Director of Communications, ACCESS

To push back against institutionalized bias and to secure a voice on issues of national importance, the National Network for Arab American Communities, a project of ACCESS has launched the Take on Hate Campaign. The campaign is based on three main areas of impact: changing policies, changing perceptions, and building the capacity of the Arab American community. Donations to the campaign will support a robust paid media strategy, engage field organizers across the country and build strategic communications capabilities.

Ms. Abbas asked that the Commission: 1) join the 14,000+ individuals and the many entities who have publicly expressed support for this movement to endorse the principles of the Take on Hate Campaign in the form of a resolution that would support creating greater awareness around Arab and Muslim Americans as well as Civil Rights in our public schools; 2) commit to collaborate on making more accessible resources and trainings that address hate crimes in our State; 3) support Rep. Christie Pagan's amendment to the State budget to ask that the Michigan State Police and the Attorney General's office make it a priority that they apply for federal funding to support training programs for local police in addressing and preventing hate crimes in the State of Michigan.

Commissioner Haque thanked Ms. Abbas for her moving presentation, and asked how the Campaign is being expanded into other cultures such as the African-American community so that it can become a national movement for additional

cultures. Ms. Abbas indicated that the Take on Hate Campaign is partnering with many other cultural advocacy entities, using the Black Lives Matter Movement as an example. Commissioner Haque also stressed the importance of cultural diversity training for law enforcement.

Commissioner Tarver requested of Ms. Abbas a copy of her Campaign presentation, inquired about non-Arab Muslims in the African American community who experience both discrimination and racial profiling in terms of law enforcement. Ms. Abbas indicated that the Campaign distinguishes between Arab American and Muslim Americans, and African Americans are included under both distinctions. Commissioner Tarver also asked if the ALPACT coalitions are helpful to the campaign. Ms. Abbas indicated that she personally is an ALPACT member, as well as several other stakeholders associated with the Campaign. Ms. Abbas also provided everyone with the campaign website: [www.takeonhate.org](http://www.takeonhate.org) for additional information.

Commissioner Arbulu inquired about the request for the Commission to develop a resolution endorsing the principles of the Take on Hate Campaign, and volunteered to work with Ms. Abbas on the resolution from the Commission.

Commissioner Demashkieh indicated that she would be in support of a Commission resolution to support the Take on Hate Campaign.

Commissioner Tarver's inquiry questioned that within the African American Community, the LGBT Community has been somewhat left behind; and have the Campaign partnerships expanded to civil rights groups for the LGBT community? Ms. Abbas indicated that the Campaign is growing new partnerships daily which does not exclude the LGBT community, but there are not any formalized partnerships as of yet. Ms. Abbas also stressed the importance of the Campaign seeking equal rights for every individual living in this country.

Commissioner Horwitz asked that Ms. Abbas and Commissioner Arbulu move forward with developing a draft resolution to be brought before the Commission at the next meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Also Director Wesaw and Lee Gonzales seeking federal funding for training regarding hate crimes, status update on the bill she referenced – for the next meeting.

#### VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rod Toneye, Restorative Justice Network – brought concerns regarding efforts to deconstruct the School to Prison Pipeline in Michigan. He is interested in expanding the protections of the ELCRA and IDEA to boys of color who are failing in school, and for the expansion to be legislated.

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was adjourned at 6:56 p.m. by  
Chair Horwitz.

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Secretary

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Director