UNEDITED

U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

BUSINESS MEETING

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2022

The Commission convened at the National Press Building, 529 14th St NW, Washington, DC, at 12:00 p.m. EDT, Norma V. Cantu, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT:

NORMA V. CANTU, Chair
J. CHRISTIAN ADAMS, Commissioner*
DEBO P. ADEGBILE, Commissioner*
STEPHEN GILCHRIST, Commissioner
GAIL HERIOT, Commissioner
PETER N. KIRSANOW, Commissioner*
DAVID Kladney, Commissioner*
MICHAEL YAKI, Commissioner*

MAURO MORALES, Staff Director
DAVID GANZ, General Counsel and Parliamentarian

* Present via telephone
STAFF PRESENT:

STANLEY CARR
PAMELA DUNSTON, Chief ASCD
ALFREDA GREENE
TINALOUISE MARTIN, Director, OM
DAVID MUSSATT, Director, RPCU

COMMISSIONER ASSISTANTS PRESENT:

JOSHUA DANSBY
ALEC DUELL
ALEXANDER HEIDEMAN
JOHN K. MASHBURN
CARISSA MULDER
JUANA SILVERIO
THOMAS SIMUEL
IRENA VIDULOC

ALSO PRESENT

WENDELL BLAYLOCK, Nevada Advisory Committee Chair
SONDRA COSGROVE, Nevada Advisory Committee Member
A G E N D A

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA...............................6

II. PRESENTATION FROM NEVADA
    ADVISORY COMMITTEE.................................7

III. DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON STATE AND
     TERRITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTEES...24

IV. DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF 2023 TOPICS..........28

V. STAFF DIRECTOR'S REPORT.........................39

       APPROVAL OF STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
       SLATES...........................................35

VI. ADJOURN MEETING ..................................42
CHAIRMAN CANTU: Welcome to the Business meeting for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The meeting comes to order at 12:01 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Friday, April 8, 2022.

I am Chair Norma V. Cantu. We thank the staff who completed the public notice needed for this meeting and arranged for this public, in-person meeting, our first business meeting in person since the pandemic started.

We thank the general public for their interest in attending. Due to respect for health and safety during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the commissioners are both in person and via conference all today, and are hosting the general public by phone conference.

I would like to confirm the commissioners present both in person and on the line and will take a roll call. Please say present or aye when I say your name.

Commissioner Adams.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS: Present.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Adegbile.

COMMISSIONER ADEGBILE: Aye.
CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Gilchrist.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Heriot.

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: I'm here.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Kirsanow.

COMMISSIONER KIRSANOW: Here.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Kladney.

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: Here.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Yaki.

COMMISSIONER YAKI: Present.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Based on the response, a quorum of commissioners is present. Is the Court Reporter present? Thank you.

Is the Staff Director present?

MR. MORALES: I'm present.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you. The meeting will now come to order.

I want to thank the commissioners and the staff for all their hard work in preparing for today's first in-person business meeting, and I want to thank everyone for in-person participation and being online.

When the Commission provided public notice, I was ambitious in estimating how many
agenda items we could cover. I realized that there were too many agenda to give each item our full attention. Therefore, as a matter of housekeeping, as Chair, I've decided to withdraw two items from today's agenda.

One that I'm withdrawing is the discussion the status of the state advisory committees and committee assignments. And the second I'm withdrawing is the discussion of our Instruction 9-1, which is appropriate use of Commission letterhead.

Do any commissioners have any objections to the withdrawal? It's a housekeeping matter. Hearing none, then I turn to the commissioners and ask if any commissioner would like an amendment to the agenda.

**I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Since there are no amendments to the agenda, let us vote to approve the agenda. All those in favor, please say aye.

(Chorus of aye.)

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Are any opposed to the agenda? And does anyone abstain? The motion passes.

For our first order of business, we're
going to turn to presentations from advisory --
from the advisory committee from Nevada. And their
presentation will be made by Nevada's Commission
Chair, Wendell Blaylock, and also committee member
Sondra Cosgrove.

The will present on the committee's
report on the impact of remote learning on
education equity in Nevada. Commissioner -- the
Chair Blaylock will speak for five minutes. So you
have the floor, Chair Blaylock.

II. PRESENTATION FROM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM NEVADA

MR. BLAYLOCK: Thank you. Thank you
for inviting Vice Chair Cosgrove and me to share
with you information regarding the Nevada Advisory
Committee's report on the impact of remote learning
on education equity in Nevada.

There was a great deal of interest in
our project from throughout the state. After the
conclusion of our hearings of May 2021, the
committee was repeatedly contacted by our
presenters and others wishing to provide progress
reports on the committee's recommendations and to
request copies of the finalized report.

Shortly after the release of the report
in November 2021, the committee contacted the
Nevada Governor, County Commission Chairs, and
municipal mayors, the Nevada Department of
Education, Nevada school district superintendents
and school board of trustees presidents, and the
Nevada system of higher education Board of Regents
to request feedback on their progress on
implementing the report recommendations.

A web hearing was scheduled for January
28, 2022 to review their feedback. At that time,
we learned that the report was read widely and
implemented in various ways.

We learned the Nevada Department of
Education ensured that every student had a device
suited for remote learning and that they were
working to ensure Native American communities are
consulted and have opportunities to contribute to
the decisionmaking process for distributing federal
funds.

Furthermore, to address the mental
health crisis in our schools, Nevada is spending
$7.5 million to hire 100 school-based mental health
professionals.

Vice Chair Cosgrove.

MS. COSGROVE: Thank you. So last
month our school district superintendents reported to our legislature that they are dispersing federal relief funding to provide wrap-around services which are included in our recommendation. The superintendents did express concern, however, that the ability to sustain these services would disappear once the federal funding is spent.

Our interim finance committee met yesterday and authorized the disbursement of just over $200 million from the American Rescue Plan to expand broadband internet services statewide, especially to our underserved populations.

And the Nevada center of -- the Nevada system of higher education received a $10 million grant to recruit and retain students for mental health degrees, while the Nevada Department of Education received $2.3 million to expand teacher training opportunities in remote learning for our rural educators.

Chair Blaylock.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Based on the testimony from the 28 January meeting and the legislative hearings, it appears that there are significant efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic among Nevada students. We are concerned, however,
that once the federal relief funding is exhausted, the supportive services will stop while the need remains.

We recommend that our legislative leaders and the governor consider sustainability planning that will build these funding needs into the state's next biannual budget.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: So I had planned for five minutes each. Would you like to expand a little more on the -- on the recommendations?

MR. BLAYLOCK: Absolutely. Yes, just one moment.

MS. COSGROVE: Chair Blaylock, should we talk about the mental health services and the dire need to train more professionals?

MR. BLAYLOCK: I think that's a good place to start. Would you like to begin, Vice Chair Cosgrove?

MS. COSGROVE: Sure. Of all of the concerns that we heard here in Nevada, probably the thing that is making us worry the most is even if we have as much federal money as they can send to us, we just do not have the mental health professionals. So we need workforce development to
be starting now, and it needs to go fast.

And that's going to include our higher education system, it's going to include Pell Grant reform. It might include tuition being forgiven.

And so we're really going to need a partnership with our federal government to make sure that the state of Nevada and I'm sure other states can start training these mental health professionals as quickly as possible to address the crisis that we're seeing in schools when it comes to mental health.

MR. BLAYLOCK: One thing that we learned with our January 28 meeting was that we desperately needed mental health professionals. So for the state, we needed over 800 counselors; 649 psychologists; over 1300 social workers; 200, almost 300 nurses; language pathologists; and library media specialists, or over 400.

And there has been money that has been allocated to meet these needs. But as we've indicated, we're concerned about sustainability.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you --

MR. BLAYLOCK: In addition, a number of our communities have spent money on the health professions. So as an example, in Washoe County,
they have spent funds for wrap-around services. They've also spent funds for learning loss and mental health issues that were made worse by the distance between towns and meeting mental health professionals.

Similarly, social workers were hired in Douglas County, Humboldt County, and Mineral Country in addition to learning strategists and other related mental health providers.

Vice Chair Cosgrove.

MS. COSGROVE: I think that pretty much covers it, because I think the other recommendations we made, we are seeing movement on those things being addressed. So the thing that worries me the most is that workforce development component that you just kind of laid out and how dire that is.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Right. There were some -- there were some challenges, opportunities for us, as well as some positive notes that you'll see in our report. Nevada was the only state that provided a device for all of our students.

In addition, there was a private-public partnership to improve broadband throughout the state for our students as well. So there were
quite a few positive things that we learned. And as I've indicated, throughout the process, we were contacted by a number of presenters and other people. In fact I was contacted by our congressional elected officials, who wished to discuss the report and what they could do going forward to be of assistance.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you. The report was very well developed, and I saw that the effort had been made to be inclusive to reach out on smaller communities and also to reach out to the indigenous Native American community. I do want to congratulate you on the writing, how well you presented the research.

The -- as Chair, I hear these reports and it makes me very, very proud of the work that is happening in our -- in our state advisory committees. Because the topics you've chosen are timely, are important.

And they -- and as you describe, they reach -- they reach national, state, and local governmental entities. So you embraced a challenging topic and you dealt with it extremely well.

I'm looking forward to hearing more
about -- from the other commissioners about any
particular areas that they'd like to learn more
about, so I'm going to now use the time to ask if
any commissioners have questions or comments. And
just to be fair, I'm going --

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: Madam Chair --

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Just let me conclude.

I will try to alternate back and forth phone and
then in-persons to be sure that everyone has time.

So from the phone, who was speaking?

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: Dave Kladney.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, your home state,
David.

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: Yes, thank you,
Madam Chair.

Chair Blaylock, Vice Chair Cosgrove,
I'd like to thank you very much. This was an
excellent report. It's well done, got very wide
exposure, got lots of press. And I think it was a
needy program in our state. And knowing the
shortages and the financial situation our state
finds itself in, especially after the pandemic and
the Great Recession.

So I'd like to thank you very much.

I'd like you to maybe give a short explanation of
how the broadband was extended throughout our rural areas during the pandemic if you could. I think that's very important for our commission to know.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Absolutely, and thank you for your comments.

The Nevada mining community in northern -- donated and contributed over $30 million to extend broadband throughout northern Nevada. And for those of you that are not familiar with Nevada, the population is concentrated in the greater Las Vegas area and the greater Reno, Sparks, and Lake Tahoe Area.

And we had -- we had a couple towns where the majority of the population did not have access to a stable internet connection. So through a private-public partnership, Nevada mines stepped up to provide $30 million.

And Vice Chair Cosgrove, who is the provider up in northern Nevada?

MS. COSGROVE: I think it's called Anthem Internet Service.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Yes, I believe that's correct. So Anthem Internet Service is expanding their service area across northern Nevada. You may recall seeing in the news last year how there were
some communities where students would have to go to a McDonalds to have an internet connection. And that was the case here in Nevada.

So we were very pleased that they stepped up to increase broadband.

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: And I would also wonder what you found out about any deficit in learning that occurred during this period of time and what the school districts are doing to try to I guess raise up the students that have had their issues.

MS. COSGROVE: So this is Vice Chair Cosgrove, I can handle that. We are hearing from our superintendents that they're using federal relief funding to hire tutors, to hire counselors, to hire -- bring back retired teachers in order to help not just focus on the learning loss. Just assume that there's going to need to be remediation and that it has to happen as fast as possible.

So we do know that they're being very creative to bring in professionals to help with that.

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: Great. Once again, I'd like to thank you both, and please tell the committee how great the report was and what
good they did. Because I know it was several
meetings, it was lots of work, and this is one of
the better reports I've seen in a while. Thank you
very much.

MS. COSGROVE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: I recognize you,
Commissioner Gilchrist.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: First of all,
Chair Blaylock and Vice Chair Cosgrove, let me
thank you as well for a report that I thought was
very well put together.

I want to make a comment and I do have
a question. My comment is relative to the private
sector involvement with your effort there. I'm
most encouraged to hear that you sought out the
private community to engage in this effort.

And as we've seen the impact of COVID
across our country as it relates to distance
learning, this is an area that I have been most
interested in wanting to explore more, so thank you
for that.

I did have a question, though,
regarding the institutionalization of distance
learning. In reading your report, it seemed to suggest that there was some interest from the larger community to institutionalize distance learning. Can you speak to that at any level?

MR. BLAYLOCK: So thank you for your question. Yes, there were some individuals, and we did have a presenter who indicated that having distance learning would be an option and choice for students and parents going forward. And that is something that we did present.

Now, Vice Chair Cosgrove can report that in the, let's see, we got the College of Southern Nevada. They have been providing distance learning for their students for quite some time. So the ability to provide distance learning is something that the College of Southern Nevada has been doing, and was able to share their experiences with other school districts throughout the state.

And Vice Chair Cosgrove, you may want to comment.

MS. COSGROVE: Yes, this is Vice Chair Cosgrove. I'm a history professor at the College of Southern Nevada, and we've been offering online education for over 20 years.

And so what we're proposing is that we
have a partnership between the community colleges
and our K12 system in order to help the K12
teachers know how to be more effective in offering
the option of distance learning.

Because we did hear that we have many
single parents or many even with two parents in the
household, if they're essential workers, oftentimes
the older children are happy to take care of the
younger children and aren't going to school during
the regular school hours.

So we would like to have remote
learning available for them asynchronously to make
sure those students can take classes when they have
time available.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: No, that's
excellent. And a followup question to that is how
has the -- your state department of education
received that information, or your superintendents
in your state?

MS. COSGROVE: They embraced it
wholeheartedly. They agree, because they are also
very concerned about those students that, quote
unquote, disappeared. They can be brought back in
and get their education is we do asynchronous
remote learning as an option.
COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Thank you very much, good report. Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. BLAYLOCK: The feedback -- the feedback from across the state has been very positive regarding our report.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Fantastic.

Thank you, Madam Chair, that's all I have.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you, Commissioner. Anyone else on the phone would like a comment or question please? Thank you.

I've got some background in school finance litigation, and I've been surprised that in my home state of Texas, that way that the state funded issues regarding to advances in technology is that they would ask school districts to compete against each other.

And they would have a limited amount of funding, and it would result in a really long wait list among those campuses and those school districts that were waiting for -- for the state assistance with being able to make some purchases.

It is a dramatic change now that there has been federal assistance to the various states.

But I don't -- I do agree completely with you all that sustainability is an issue. That now that the
students, the parents, and the teachers have been shown that -- that some instruction can be done online, how do we sustain that interest and how do we scaffold and learn in addition.

Do you all have any thoughts with regards to the -- tell me more about the partnerships because I'm excited about that as well, because teacher training is key. Can you tell me more about the sustainability moving forward?

MS. COSGROVE: This is Vice Chair Cosgrove. I would say that sustainability component is what were thinking of when we suggested having a partnership within the education system, so that if the community colleges are the ones doing the partnership, there's not going to be any extra cost.

And then maybe Chair Blaylock would like to talk about maybe some of the private partnership opportunities.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Yes, thank you, Vice Chair Cosgrove.

So we did have -- we were very pleased with the private and public partnership opportunities, one with Connecting Kids, and
Connecting Kids, as you can see in the report, ensured that every student throughout the state did have a device so that they could do their learning online.

Also the Elaine Wynn Foundation, which is connected with a number of private organizations, including Cox Communication and CenturyLink.

The various cities and other organizations here in southern Nevada put together a partnership concerning our broadband access, so the ISPs, or internet service providers, ensure that in communities that were in LMI areas, that the households would have a stable internet connection.

And that they would have speed of at least 25 megabits per second, which you need to have in order to download assignments, to have multiple pages open online, and to actually do your assignments.

So we were very pleased with the partnership that occurred here in the state of Nevada.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Well, I congratulate both and the entire committee for the state
advisory committee for Nevada for an excellent report. You all are being very creative in how to make the education excellent in Nevada, and you're being very creative in including all aspects of the communities, including the tribal communities.

I congratulate you. I see how well you are working to forge these partnerships, and I hope I could call you again later after this meeting so that I can continue to learn from you. So we thank you very deeply.

MS. COSGROVE: Thank you so much for saying that.

MR. BLAYLOCK: We appreciate that. And just so you know, we do have an addendum that is currently going through legal sufficiency review, and that should be --

MS. COSGROVE: Actually, Chair Blaylock, it's on the report, it's on the website right now. And it just emailed late last night.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Oh, okay. So there is an addendum that's available now. So it will have -- it will summarize the information from our January 28 report and the progress that has been made since we concluded our hearings in May and published our report in November.
CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you very much.
If there are no further questions, we're going to move to our next item.

Chair Blaylock and Vice Chair Cosgrove, you're welcome to stay online if you'd like, but if you need to say your goodbyes, we do again thank you very much for your service and your leadership on the Nevada State Advisory Committee, and for taking the time to speak with us about this important matter today. So thank you again.

MS. COSGROVE: Thank you.

MR. BLAYLOCK: Thank you for having us.

III. DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON THE STATE AND TERRITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

CHAIRMAN CANTU: It's a pleasure.

Now we're going to turn a discussion and vote on the state and territorial advisory committee appointed -- appointments.

First, we're -- as you know, the Commission depends on the advice from highly qualified persons who serve in each of our 50 states plus the District of Columbia, and most recently the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.
Today we will appoint two advisory committees, Hawaii and Ohio. I move to appoint the following persons to serve as advisory committee members in Hawaii, based on the recommendations of the staff director. And I'm going to call out their names, and I hope their families are listening, or at least it will be recorded, so their families will know that this is happening.


All these individuals will serve as uncompensated government employees. If the motion passes, the Commission will authorize a staff director to execute the appropriate paperwork. Do I have a second for the motion regarding the Hawaii committee, advisory committee?

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: I second the motion.
CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you, Commissioner Heriot.

I'll open to the floor to any discussion or questions, or the phone. Thank you. I'll call the question and take a roll call vote.

Commissioner Adams, how do you vote?

COMMISSIONER ADAMS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Adegbile?

COMMISSIONER ADEGBILE: Abstain.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Gilchrist?

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Heriot?

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: I vote yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Kirsanow?

COMMISSIONER KIRSANOW: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Kladney?

COMMISSIONER KLADNEY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Yaki.

COMMISSIONER YAKI: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: And I -- and I vote yes. The motion carries, seven yes and one abstention. Is my math right?

MR. MORALES: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you. I have
trouble counting all the way up to eight, so the lucky number eight.

   I now move to appoint the following persons to serve as Commission advisory committee members in Ohio, based on the recommendations of the staff director.


   All these individuals will serve as uncompensated government employees. If the motion passes, the Commission will authorize the staff director to execute the appropriate paperwork.

   Do I have a second for this motion?

   COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Second, Madam Chair.
CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you, Commissioner Gilchrist. I'll open the floor for discussion. Thank you. Not hearing discussion, I'll call the question and take a roll call vote.

Commissioner Adams, how do you vote?

COMMISSIONER ADAMS: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Adegbile?

COMMISSIONER ADEGBILE: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Gilchrist?

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Heriot.

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: I vote yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Kirsanow.

COMMISSIONER KIRSANOW: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Kladney.

COMMISSIONER KLDANEY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Commissioner Yaki.

COMMISSIONER YAKI: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: And I vote yes. The motion passes unanimously.

IV. DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF 2023 TOPICS

We now turn to the third and last item on our agenda, and that is to discuss the status of our 2023 and -- topics. And if we do want to, we
can also discuss whether we need a committee to have a -- to proceed with our topics.

As you recall, Congress requires that the Commission -- Congress requires from our commission a statutory investigative report every year. And we submit additional Commission reports, which are approved by a majority of the commissioners.

For Fiscal Year 2022, we voted last year to do a statutory report regarding the responses of FEMA to hurricanes Harvey and Maria. And for 2022, we've also approved data collection in the form of a survey of the U.S. Commission's advisory committees for states and territories. This survey of our advisory committees should produce a second civil rights report.

So for Fiscal Year 2022, we will have two reports. We will fulfill our mandate from the statute that we have the FEMA report, and we also will count the survey questions and the survey responses that are put together into a report as one of our national reports.

I take this moment to please ask if there are any members of our state advisory committees or territorial advisory committees, if
you've not responded already to the survey that was sent out, you still have time. We have until close of business on Monday, April 11, so please, please share with us your survey responses.

So today the -- I'm looking at the calendar for Fiscal Year 2023, we are to choose topics. And I know we struggled last year to stay on schedule, but thanks to the hard work of your -- the commissioners and all our staff, we were able to conduct investigations last year. And we used briefings using virtual means.

Last year in December we were even able to hold a hybrid briefing session with commissioners in person and virtually. It was a challenge, but I believe the results were well worth it. So I'm grateful to all of you in terms of our work for Fiscal Year 2022.

Today I'm asking the commissioners to pick up one strand of a conversation that we had at a previous business meeting, and that discussion centered on not using the trading of votes on selecting the topics. This process of if you choose my topic, I'll choose your topic really doesn't recognize that each topic should stand on its merits.
While I understand that Congress and other bodies use a log-rolling method of voting on certain matters, that method didn't work for us last year as a commission. So my question is whether there are other processes that we can use.

And today I want to have a conversation, a discussion about how do we get to consensus on the topics for Fiscal Year 2023, or at least the majority votes that we need to have to approve going forward on those topics. We're not taking a vote today on any of these ideas that we hope to generate by our discussion, but we are exploring them.

And I'm prepared to listen to you, and I promise to all the commissioners to do my best not to interrupt you. With eight commissioners, I estimate our talk could last 20 minutes, 30 minutes. You can take less time or more time, but I'm looking forward to your ideas.

So I'm turning it over to you folk. Should I start with the phone? Is someone on the phone willing to help us have this conversation about how we can do better this year than last year?
COMMISSIONER HERIOT: Uh oh.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: All right, let me suggest my idea and -- and please, please, you know, improve it.

I'm suggesting that we have a -- that I appoint a committee that is a bipartisan committee. It does -- it will not violate any of our laws in terms of open meetings, it'll be smaller than the quorum. But that that committee work on finding -- helping us stay on task so we don't run out of time and have the clock run out of us, as was a problem last year.

And that if you want to discuss the committee idea, this is -- this is an opportunity so that we can all hear each other.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS: Chair Cantu, Adams.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS: I'd like to say that that -- I think the committee idea's a fantastic one. I know that some on the Commission, despite your reservations about so-called log-rolling, were perfectly willing to move forward with a variety of topics. It wasn't even a close call, the willingness of some of us, I dare say probably a majority on the Commission.
And I think the committee is a great way to have some folks carefully look at it without some of the temperature, high temperature views that we encountered whenever ideas were proposed. So I would support any particular motion you want to put forward on that issue.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: And again, we're not voting, we're discussing. So but, I appreciate your enthusiasm, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, Commissioner Heriot.

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: I would say that I would rate the committee idea somewhat less than fantastic but adequate, you know. It's good enough, you know. We gotta -- we gotta move forward, and we're going to move forward.

I would hesitate to the use the word log-rolling on what we were doing before, where I would call that compromise. That in the past if a commissioner felt very strongly about -- about an issue, even if it wasn't, you know, something that the whole Commission was enthusiastic about it, we'd do it, you know.

There was a time when we had six
commissioners who I would say were center left, and
two that were center right. And still the center
right, even though they would be outvoted on any
particular issue, could have a topic of theirs
addressed. And I think that's actually the better
way to go about it.

Sounds like you're not the fond of it,
and you're the Chair, and I think that that counts
for something. So I think the committee idea is
probably a good one here, and that we ought to be
able to come up with something, and we will, we
will.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: I appreciate that very
much, thank you, thank you.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, Commissioner
Gilchrist.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: I just want to
echo Commissioner Heriot's point as well.
Compromise is good, and I think any time we have an
opportunity to do that, more specifically when
we're trying to have balance in our discussions, I
think that is certainly something that we should
consider.

But I, too, would very much support the
idea of a committee being appointed to begin to look at proposals that we all believe that we can get some consensus on.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Thank you, thank you. On the phone, any commissioners have questions or comments to add to the discussion? Well, it seems we have informed me at least about some ideas.

COMMISSIONER YAKI: This is Commissioner Yaki.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, Commissioner, thank you.

COMMISSIONER YAKI: I am a little unclear on the concept of what this committee's charge would be exactly. Would it be to discuss how to get to topics, or it'd be to -- or it would to discuss resolution or accommodation on individual topics?

CHAIRMAN CANTU: I'm open to hearing your suggestion. Which are you proposing?

COMMISSIONER YAKI: Well, I mean, it was your idea, so I'm just trying to get an idea of exactly what it is your -- your thoughts were about it.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: I started out with a notion of trying to figure out where the process
slowed down. And it seemed to slow down with the
bundling of topics that I'm not going to describe.

    We didn't get to the part of really

thoroughly describing each topic because we worked
as a group of topics, and I had trouble with that.

    But, because each topic is important and each
topic ultimately will have to be voted as a
separate topic and not as a group of topics.

    But I -- but I -- to answer your
question in terms of as an individual, as an
individual I think that we're looking for a topic
that -- that embraces principles held by both
caucuses, progressive and conservative. And that
that is doable.

    I mean, today, we heard from one of the
state advisory committees a topic that affects
everyone in a bipartisan way, you know, having
access to high quality education without the
barrier of the internet breaking down.

    So there are topics that do exist, and
I would task that committee to look at the process
to see if there are ways to improve it. But also,
also to feel free to discuss what topics they want
to pursue.

    And this committee does not -- does not
change the fact that we've already agreed at an earlier meeting to follow a timeline and to meet that timeline for -- for doing the work that we're required to do by Congress.

MR. MORALES: Madam Chair, if I might be able to opine?

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, Staff Director.

MR. MORALES: I just want to let you and all the commissioners know that we would be supportive of any method that could assist commissioners in reaching consensus on a topic that they wish the Commission's full-time professional employees of the Commission to study.

I would offer to you, you know, the expertise of the Office of Civil Rights Evaluation and the Office of our General Counsel to assist you in whatever type of committee you may be interested in creating or how you -- the process you'd like to begin. We have a level of expertise in having done these for many years.

But we can't think of anything that's more important for commissioners than to decide what those topics are. Especially, you know, as you well know, and all the commissioners know, there's a time period, a long runway of where we
have to prepare the discovery plans, the briefing plans, hold the briefings, and then do one to two different drafts of a report that turns out to be acceptable for all commissioners that they can vote on.

So the sooner is better, obviously, and puts a lot of pressure on the staff to try to turn things around in only a few months' period of time as opposed to a longer period of time. But we're — I just want you to know that we are supportive and that we as a staff would be more than happy to assist in any manner you might want. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Any other comments, any other ideas for us? Well, I kept my promise and did not interrupt. And I do appreciate the feedback that the -- that perception is everything, the perception is that people are trying their best to compromise and to work out topics that are useful and fulfill our mission.

And so -- so I'm taking this as -- with some encouragement, I'm taking this very positively to go ahead and proceed with creating a committee. I encourage you all to volunteer, but if you don't volunteer, I'm afraid you'll be voluntold. I do need your help.
This is important work that we do, and these reports have been used to -- as a support for improving policy and have been used to support by Congress to pass new legislation. So the work that you as commissioners do is very valuable, and I just want to share that with you again and again.

Any other items, any other discussions on this item?

Now I'll turn to Staff Director Morales. Mr. Morales, we can hear from you -- from you in the monthly Staff Director's report, please.

V. STAFF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MR. MORALES: Madam Chair, thank you very much.

I have nothing further to add than what's already contained in the report, of course.

And of course I'm always available for any commissioner that may have a question about a particular item in the report. And in order to be brief, I'll move forward, unless there's a particular question.

But I would like to take a moment of personal privilege to thank Alex Heideman for his service. I understand he's going to be leaving our commission. We appreciate his professionalism and
how he has worked well with the staff and various endeavors.

And specifically in getting the state advisory committees up to speed and the slate prepared that we can vote on him and some other. But I want to just do a shout-out for him and really appreciate his professionalism. And we'll miss and wish -- we wish him the best.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, Commissioner Heriot?

COMMISSIONER HERIOT: I would also like to have a shout-out to Alex Heideman here. He has been a terrific special assistant, and I'm so sorry that he's leaving me. Alex, come back.

But you know, life is changing for Alex. He's down in Atlanta now, and he's going to be a father soon. So congratulations to Alex. But like, he has been terrific. I wish he were staying with us, and I wish him the best.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: With that, thank you for your report. Thank you for your wonderful warm wishes for Mr. Heideman. So that concludes the
business items --

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Oh, Commissioner Gilchrist.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: If I could just -- I'm sorry to.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Yes, yes.

COMMISSIONER GILCHRIST: I just want to make an observation that I think the United States Commission on Civil Rights can't ignore. On yesterday, we had a justice appointed to the United States Supreme Court. I have a Black wife who called me yesterday in my travels to remind me how important that was to her.

And certainly I don't agree with all of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's rulings, but I can't ignore the fact that what happened on yesterday was historic, not only for her and her family, but for our country. And I just wanted to make sure that before we left here today, that we did not overlook that opportunity.

So thank you, Madam Chair. And again, my congratulations to Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson.

CHAIRMAN CANTU: Well, well spoken.

Thank you, Commissioner.
So that concludes the business on the agenda of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for our business meeting. If there's nothing further, I hereby adjourn -- adjourn the meeting at 12:48 Eastern Standard Time.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:48 p.m.)