

UNEDITED

U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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BUSINESS MEETING

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FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2026

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The Commission convened at 1331
Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest, Suite 1150,
Washington, D.C. 20425 at 10:00 a.m., Rochelle
Garza, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT:

ROCHELLE GARZA, Chair
VICTORIA NOURSE, Vice Chair
MONDAIRE JONES, Commissioner
GLENN MAGPANTAY, Commissioner

MARIK XAVIER-BRIER, Acting Staff Director
DAVID GANZ, General Counsel and
Parliamentarian

STAFF PRESENT:

JULIAN NELSON
ESSENCE PERRY
MICHELE YORKMAN-RAMEY

COMMISSIONER ASSISTANTS PRESENT:

NATHALIE DEMIRDJIAN-RIVEST
IRENA VIDULOVIC
STEPHANIE WONG
YVESNER ZAMAR

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I. Roll Call

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

10:05 a.m.

CHAIR GARZA: Good morning, everyone.
We're going to get started today. The business
meeting of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
comes to order at 10:05 a.m. Eastern Time on
Friday, July 17th, 2026. This meeting is taking
place at the Commission's headquarters located
at 1331 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest,
Washington, D.C.

I'm chair of the Commission, Rochelle
Garza. I'm going to go ahead and begin with the
roll call. So, please confirm your presence
when I call your name.

Vice Chair Nourse?

VICE CHAIR NOURSE: Present.

CHAIR GARZA: Commissioner Adams? Do
we have Commissioner Adams on the call? No.

Commissioner Frankenstein? I'm being
told we do not have Commissioner Frankenstein on
the call.

Commissioner Gilchrist? I am, also,
being told that Commissioner Gilchrist is not on
the call.

Commissioner Jones?

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1 COMMISSIONER JONES: Present.

2 CHAIR GARZA: Commissioner Kirsanow? I
3 am being told that Commissioner Kirsanow is not
4 on the call either.

5 Commissioner Magpantay?

6 COMMISSIONER MAGPANTAY: I'm here,
7 present.

8 CHAIR GARZA: And I am present.

9 Based on that roll call, we do not have
10 a quorum of commissioners present. Because we
11 do not have a quorum, the Commission cannot
12 conduct official business or take votes on the
13 matters that have been noticed for today's
14 meeting.

15 However, I do think it's critical that
16 we exercise transparency for the benefit of the
17 American public as resources have been expended
18 to have this meeting. I want the record to
19 reflect that today's meeting was noticed.
20 Commissioners were notified months in advance
21 that this meeting would occur in person and
22 travel costs were incurred and have been
23 incurred.

24 Moreover, commissioners have been
25 provided a dial-in number as an alternative to

1 in-person attendance and the commissioners that
2 are present here today were prepared to conduct
3 the Commission's business and adhere to our
4 statutory duties.

5 Today's agenda includes some of the
6 most important responsibilities that the
7 Commission has. We were scheduled to vote on
8 our Fiscal Year 2026 statutory enforcement
9 report, the federal response to the rise in
10 antisemitism on college -- American college and
11 university campuses, consider findings and
12 recommendations, as well as vote on the
13 Commission's 2027 report topics.

14 The Commission has always been its best
15 when it responds to important civil rights
16 issues with careful investigations, rigorous
17 determination of facts, and thoughtful
18 recommendations. Our report on antisemitism
19 reflects that work. We studied the issues. We
20 heard from witnesses. We built a factual
21 record. And we prepared findings and
22 recommendations for this body's consideration to
23 be forwarded to Congress and the President.

24 And today, we were, also, scheduled to
25 decide whether to take up another issue that

1 members of Congress have specifically asked this
2 Commission to examine and has been pending since
3 September of 2025 and that is the issue of
4 federal immigration enforcement.

5 As somebody who lives on the Texas-
6 Mexico border, immigration enforcement has
7 always been a part of my daily life, but over
8 the last year and a half what we have seen has
9 raised some serious civil rights concerns,
10 including racial profiling and the excessive use
11 of force and the scale and scope of those
12 enforcement efforts have impacted a number of
13 communities across the country and they deserve
14 careful examination, especially by a body like
15 ours, an independent agency.

16 Over the past several months, I was
17 invited and I did attend people's hearings on
18 immigration enforcement in St. Paul, Chicago,
19 Los Angeles, and other communities. I listened
20 to parents, workers, faith leaders, educators,
21 attorneys, and directly-impacted individuals
22 describe how enforcement efforts have impacted
23 their families, their neighborhoods, and their
24 sense of safety.

25 What I heard reinforced for me why this

1 Commission exists, not to pre-judge the facts,
2 but to gather them. That is why I proposed the
3 concept paper Beyond the Border: The State of
4 Civil Rights Under Federal Immigration
5 Enforcement in America's Communities. It
6 responds to the request from members of Congress
7 lead by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus asking
8 this Commission to examine the civil rights
9 implications of federal immigration enforcement.

10 And recent events underscore why this work
11 matters. Within the past week and a half ICE
12 officers fatally shot Lorenzo Salgado Araujo in
13 Houston Texas and Johan Sebastian Duran Guerrero
14 in Biddeford, Maine. Neither were the intended
15 targets when they were killed. And these deaths
16 follow the fatal shootings of American citizens,
17 Renee Good, Alex Pretti during federal
18 immigration enforcement operations in
19 Minneapolis earlier this year. And we should
20 not forget Ruben Ray Martinez, a 23-year-old
21 American citizen who was fatally shot by ICE on
22 South Padre Island in 2005. South Padre Island
23 is just 20 minutes from where I live.

24 I want to be clear. These events do
25 not tell us what the conclusions of a commission

1 investigation should be, but they do remind us
2 why Congress created this Commission, to ask
3 difficult questions, establish the facts, and
4 make recommendations based on the evidence that
5 we gather. We, also, had before us a proposal
6 from Commissioner Gilchrist to examine whether
7 federal civil rights protections are adequately
8 protecting seniors and people with disabilities
9 who live in nursing homes and long term care
10 facilities.

11 These are two very different issues,
12 but they share something important in common.
13 Both raise serious questions about whether the
14 Federal Government is protecting people's civil
15 rights. Both deserve to be considered by this
16 Commission.

17 Whether commissioners ultimately
18 support either proposal is a decision that we
19 make together. Our responsibility today was
20 simply to deliberate and to vote and in my
21 conversations with Commissioners Adams and
22 Gilchrist last week, neither raised any
23 substantive objection to either proposal.

24 Instead, what has been indicated to me
25 is a concern over votes on the matters of

1 presidential designations, particularly
2 designation of the Staff Director. As
3 commissioners know, I asked the White House
4 Presidential Personnel Office to clarify whether
5 the documents recently circulated to
6 commissioners are intended to serve as the
7 President's formal request for the Commission's
8 concurrence as required by 42 USC Section 1975.

9 That is our operating statute. We have not
10 received that clarification. And until we do, I
11 do not believe it is appropriate per our statute
12 to place those designations before the
13 Commission for a vote.

14 And at the same time, the Commission's
15 other statutory duties remain ahead of us. We
16 have a duty. Our responsibilities do not stop.

17 We have to continue doing our work.

18 The designation issue is separate from
19 the work Congress has already assigned this
20 Commission and we should be able to carry that
21 work while we await clarification. But
22 unfortunately, because we don't have a quorum
23 today, we cannot do that. We cannot vote on our
24 statutory enforcement report for 2026. We
25 cannot decide whether to investigate the civil

1 rights implications of federal immigration
2 enforcement, and we cannot decide whether to
3 examine the civil rights of seniors and people
4 with disabilities in long term care facilities.

5 And we cannot conduct the rest of the business
6 that was scheduled for this meeting.

7 I won't hide my disappointment. I am
8 somebody who likes to work across the aisle and
9 have proven that over the last several years and
10 my hope is that we continue to find a way to
11 work together and move forward.

12 The -- I'll go ahead and close with
13 this. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights was
14 created by Congress to be an independent,
15 bipartisan fact-finding agency. Our
16 responsibility is not to begin with answers. It
17 is to ask difficult questions, follow the facts
18 wherever they lead, hear from the people most
19 affected, and provide recommendations to
20 Congress and the President based on the
21 evidence. That responsibility only works when
22 the Commission comes together to deliberate and
23 vote. Today, we were unable to do that.

24 The issues before us, antisemitism on
25 college campuses, immigration enforcement, and

1 the civil rights of seniors and people with
2 disabilities are too important to leave
3 unresolved. The American people deserve a
4 commission that is able to do the work that
5 Congress has tasked us to do.

6 I remain committed to working with all
7 of my colleagues regardless of political
8 affiliation so that this Commission can continue
9 to fulfill its duties and its mission. Because
10 a quorum is not present, no further commission
11 business can occur, so we are going to go ahead
12 and close today.

13 CHAIR GARZA: The meeting is adjourned
14 at 10:14 a.m. Eastern Time, July 17th.

15 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
16 went off the record at 10:14 a.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings; and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this matter was taken; and further that I am not a relative nor an employee of any of the parties nor counsel employed by the parties, and I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



Eric Mollen

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