

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

PRESS RELEASE

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Minnesota Advisory Committee to Hold Forum Examining Disparate Impact of Unemployment in Twin Cities

CHICAGO, IL – The Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights will conduct a community forum on September 15 investigating the causes and responses to Minneapolis having the highest black-white unemployment ratio in the nation. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the Minneapolis black unemployment rate is three times the white rate. The forum will follow up and monitor changes made since Governor Dayton’s economic summit on the same topic this past March. The meeting will be held at the University of St. Thomas School of Law, Moot Court Room, 1000 LaSalle Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. An agenda is attached. Among those who are scheduled on the agenda are U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Chair, Martin R. Castro; Representative Bobby Jo Champion; Council on Crime and Justice President, Judge Pam Alexander; Ramsey County Commissioner Tony Bennett; Minnesota Department of Human Rights Commissioner, Kevin Lindsay; and Minneapolis Urban League CEO & President, Scott Gray.

The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan federal agency that conducts research and advises the President and Congress on civil rights issues. Its members, appointed by the President and Congress, are Chair Castro, Vice Chair Abigail Thernstrom, and Commissioners Roberta Achtenberg, Todd Gaziano, Gail Heriot, Peter N. Kirsanow, David Kladney, and Michael Yaki.

Congress has directed the Commission to establish state advisory committees (SACs) in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and their members serve without compensation. The members of the Minnesota Advisory Committee are Chair Nekima Levy-Pounds and members Rev. Robert Battle, Ryan Check, Kenneth Doyle, Joann Enos, John Gilbertson, Kirk Kolbo, Velma Korbel, Teresa Nelson, Shamus O’Meara, and Craig Taylor. The SACs’ reports to the Commission are wholly independent, and are not subject to Commission approval, fact-checking or policy changes.

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COMMUNITY FORUM AGENDA

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE TWIN CITIES

MINNESOTA ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Thursday, September 15, 2011

University of St. Thomas School of Law
1000 LaSalle Ave., Moot Court Room
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Introductions

9:00 a.m. to 9:10 a.m.

Nekima Levy-Pounds, Chair, Minnesota Advisory Committee

Welcome

9:10 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

Martin R. Castro, Chair, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Panel 1: Overview of Unemployment Disparities & Causes in Minnesota

9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Tom Gillaspay, Ph.D., Minnesota State Demographer

Judge Pam Alexander, President, Council on Crime and Justice

Sam Myers, Ph.D., Roy Wilkins Professor of Human Relations and Social Justice, Hubert H. Humphrey
Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Mark Brinda, Ph.D., Workforce Manager, City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program

Panel 2: Government Contracts and Barriers to Small Business

10:40 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Hon. Tony Bennett, Ramsey County Commissioner

Lea Hargett, President, Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce

Ravi Norman, Chief Executive Officer, Thor Construction

Tony Williamson, Chief Executive Order, AJASA Technologies

Panel 3: Barriers to Employment / Government Response

12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Kevin Lindsay, Commissioner of Human Rights, Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Patricia Brady, Director, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

Hon. Bobby Jo Champion, District 58B Representative, Minnesota House of Representatives

Panel 4: Community Response

1:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Louis King, HIRED & Summit Academy OIC

Scott Gray, President & CEO of Minneapolis Urban League

Representative, Isaiah

Carol Swenson, Executive Director, District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis