



Quarterly Newsletter: October – December 2017

HEADQUARTERS ACTIVITY

November: We celebrated our 60th anniversary with a commemorative [event](#) at the Library of Congress. Dr. Carla Hayden, the Librarian of Congress, offered a keynote address, and Congressman Derek Kilmer [spoke](#) to the role and impact of the Commission, including his experience with a 2016 visit by Commissioners to the Quinault Nation in the state of Washington. Congressman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. also shared written [remarks](#). We invite you to view coverage on [C-SPAN](#).



Chair Lhamon; Vice Chair Timmons-Goodson; Commissioners Adegbile, Heriot, Kladney, Narasaki, and Yaki; and former Chairs Allen and Castro participated in the Commission's 60th anniversary at the Library of Congress in November.



MSNBC anchor Richard Lui addresses guests at our 60th anniversary in November.

On November 29, the Commission issued “Working for Inclusion: Time for Congress to Enact Federal Legislation to Address Workplace Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Americans.” The [report](#), based on testimony and written materials submitted to the Commission, along with extensive social science research and surveys, reflects the reality that many LGBT Americans experience prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. In addition to the report, please see our press [release](#) for a summary of key findings and recommendations.

At our November 13 business [meeting](#), the Commission, by majority vote, issued a [statement](#) in support of certain sentencing reduction provisions in the bipartisan Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2017. Commissioners also voted to approve Shaakirrah Sanders and Alexes Harris as chairs of our Idaho and Washington State Advisory Committees (SACs), respectively.

December:

On December 8, in Washington, we held a public [briefing](#), “The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Intersections of Students of Color with Disabilities,” to examine compliance with federal laws designed to protect students of color with disabilities from discrimination, and to determine whether laws adequately protect these students from discriminatory disciplinary actions and policies. As we noted at the beginning of the briefing, this Commission briefing follows, and is informed by, recent SAC reports from [Indiana](#) and [Oklahoma](#) on related issues. The session can be viewed on our YouTube [channel](#).



We heard from diverse panelists at the Commission's briefing, "The School-to-Prison Pipeline: The Intersections of Students of Color with Disabilities," in November.

At our December 21 business meeting, the Commission, by majority vote, issued a [statement](#) calling on the Department of Homeland Security and Congress to investigate alleged abusive labor practices at government- and privately-operated immigration detention centers and to require fair wages for all detainees.

STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) ACTIVITY

Our SACs continue to be active in investigating and reporting on civil rights issues in their states. We thank the members of all SACs for selecting important topics for investigation, hosting briefings, and issuing – or preparing to issue – reports on these important topics. Here are some highlights:

On November 1, in Wilmington, our Delaware SAC held a public [briefing](#), “Policing in Communities of Color in Delaware, Including a Discussion of the Impact of Implicit Bias in Policing.”

On November 15, in [Grambling](#), and on December 6, in [Baton Rouge](#), our Louisiana SAC held briefings on barriers to voting in the state.

New Chairs: Shaakirrah Sanders, Idaho, and Alexes Harris, Washington (state).

New SAC appointments:

- **New Jersey:**

Lawrence Lustberg, Chair, resident of Chatham; Sahara Aziz, Westfield; Marcia Brown, Long Branch; Lora Fong, Edison; Brian Gaffney, Morristown; Manuel Garcia, Warren; Erica Jednyak, Rockaway; Donita Judge, Denville; Pearl Park, Summit; Joan Rivitz, Paramus; Saulo Santiago, Jersey City; Daniel Schuberth, Robbinsville; Amol Sinha, Jersey City; John Stanley Jr., Wyckoff; William Stephney, Rockaway; Kristian Stout, Robbinsville; Frank Tinari, Florham Park; Carole Tonks, Brick.

- **North Dakota:**

Eric Asa, Chair, West Fargo; Cesario Alvarez, Jr., New Town; Scott Beaulier, Fargo; David Chapman, West Fargo; Yee Han Chu, Grand Forks; Kirsten Dauphinais, Grand Forks; Crystal Dueker, Fargo; Stephanie Johnson, Grand Forks; Cheryl Kary, Bismarck; Lisa Lone Fight, New Town; Michelle Rydz, Grand Forks; Sheryl Stradinger, Bismarck.

- **Rhode Island:**

Jennifer Steinfeld, Chair, Providence; Alero Akporiaye, Rumford; Donald Anderson, North Kingstown; Farid Ansari, Johnston; Charles Berkley, Jr., Cranston; Marcela Betancur, North Providence; Langdon Clough, West Warwick; Ernest Greco, Providence; Margaux Morisseau, Scituate; Adelita Orefice, Providence; Gary Sasse, East Greenwich; Elena Shih, Providence; Andrew Tugan, East Greenwich; William Wray, East Greenwich.

Congratulations to our new chairs and appointees, and our continued thanks for all of their service to civil rights, their communities, and to the Commission.



Chair Lhamon met Maryland SAC Chair Tom Mackall at the Commission's 60th anniversary event in November.



In November, Chair Lhamon joined members of our Delaware SAC at its briefing, "Policing in Communities of Color, Including a Discussion of the Impact of Implicit Bias in Policing."

LOOKING AHEAD: 2018

On January 11, the Commission issued "Public Education Funding Inequity in an Era of Increasing Concentration of Poverty and Resegregation." The [report](#) examines the funding of K-12 education and how the inequitable distribution of these funds negatively

and disproportionately impact the educational opportunities of low-income students and students of color.

On February 2, in Raleigh, NC, the Commission will hold a public briefing to inform our [assessment](#) of obstacles to voting rights, examining the Department of Justice's enforcement efforts following the 2006 reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, including the impact of the *Shelby County* decision, as well as the proliferation of restrictions on voter access. We will hear from diverse stakeholders and the public in an open comment period. Stay tuned for details on our website and social media.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1999, the North Dakota State Advisory Committee (SAC) submitted a report, "Civil Rights Enforcement in North Dakota," on its study of civil rights enforcement efforts in the state. The study was based on background research and interviews by Committee members and staff, public fact-finding meetings conducted in Bismarck and Fargo, and follow-up data collection and additional interviews conducted after the meetings.

The report identified and analyzed the barriers North Dakota citizens face in attempting to file discrimination complaints seeking relief or remedies. The Committee found that "North Dakota desperately needs a mechanism to carry out the provisions of the North Dakota Human Rights Act. In addition, the extent of discrimination in the state needs to be determined, and a human rights commission established with full investigative and enforcement powers."

The following year, in response to the SAC report, 61 organizations from across the state joined together to form the North Dakotans for a Human Rights Commission Coalition. This organization is a "broad-based coalition of individuals and organizations with an interest in the furtherance of human rights in North Dakota [that works] toward the enhancement of human rights in North Dakota through information."

For more information, please see:

<http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/sac/nd1199/main.htm>
<http://ndhrc.org/>

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and reporting annually on civil rights. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: Entering our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For more information, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).