

**State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
Commission Meeting
February 13, 2024 – 10am
Meeting held virtually via Google Meet
MINUTES**

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Suerth, MPA, CCEP, Chair; Janssen E. Evelyn, Esq, Vice Chair; Angela Scott, Esq; Isabella Shycoff; Jeff Rosen; Magdalena S. Navarro, Eileen Levett, Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA

Management Present: Cleveland L. Horton II, Deputy Director; Glendora Hughes, General Counsel; Dia Drake- Sprague, Director of Education and Outreach

Staff Present: Gerald T. Ford, Executive Associate; Alesha Bell, Unit Supervisor (Employment)

Members of the Public: Derrick Mays, Chris Kelley

Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Chairperson’s Report

The Chair thanked those Commissioners who were present during Human Rights Day in Annapolis as well as the Hate Bias Reporting Forum in Baltimore.

The Chair also reminded the Commissioners about the Gala on August 24th.

Deputy Director’s Report

- The Deputy Director highlighted a few points from the Case Processing Unit’s written report.
- MCCR had its Budget hearings on February 1-2, 2024, and the meetings went well. MCCR asked for a concurrence in the Governor's allowance for our budget and is hopeful that MCCR can obtain additional resources, specifically for its Legal Department.
- As mentioned by the Chair, MCCR had another successful Hate Bias Reporting Forum in Baltimore at the end of January.
- The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) and the MD State Commission of Real Estate Appraisers, Appraisal Management Companies, and Home Inspectors (SCREA et.al.) announced an interagency cooperation regarding fair housing issues and complaints as they relate to real estate appraisals. The main goal of this agreement is to better enforce Title 20, Subtitle 7 of the Annotated Code of Maryland as it pertains to appraisal bias. The agreement states that all of the appraisal bias complaints will be forwarded over to MCCR.

- MCCR arranged for a meeting with all of the fair housing organizations throughout the state who do enforcement to have a conversation around enforcement consistency. The meeting is to ensure that throughout the state, we are enforcing fair housing consistently.

General Counsel's Report

- The General Counsel highlighted a few points from the Unit's written report.
- In the General Assembly, the deadline for bills was the week of February 5th and over 3000 bills were filed. The bills identified this month for discussion are:

HB0368 (SB666)

Title: Human Relations - Discrimination by a Place of Public Accommodation

HB 469

Title: Employment Discrimination - Exceptions - Religious Activities of Religious Employers

HB0598 (SB0413)

Title: Discrimination - Military Status - Prohibition

HB 788

Title: Human Relations - Protections Against Discrimination - Criminal Records

HB 1041

Title: Criminal Law - Hate Crimes - Religion and Disability

HB0602

Title: Employment Discrimination – Sexual Orientation

SB513 (HB525)

Title: Employment Discrimination - Use of Cannabis Products

Education and Outreach Report

- MCCR will embark on a listening tour from late April until September. This tour will touch every county throughout the entire state. This will allow communities the opportunity to directly communicate their issues as it pertains to civil and human rights. MCCR's plan is to include those concerns within our own strategic priorities. The Chair suggested that we have a standing survey on the website for those who cannot attend the listening session.

- MCCR, in partnership with Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women, hosted "Artistic Expression of Black Heritage: Celebrating Creativity" event at the Enoch Pratt Central Library in celebration of Black History Month
- On March 6th, MCCR and the National Council of Negro Women, Inc will host a book signing and discussion with Elizabeth Leiba. Join us as we discuss her book, "I'm not Yelling: A Black Woman's Guide to Navigating the Workplace" at the Red Emma's Bookstore Coffeehouse.
- April 17th MCCR is holding a virtual event with guest speaker, Stacey Herman to discuss neurodiversity at work. The forum will discuss understanding neurodiversity, talking about stereotypes regarding neurodiversity, and management strategies on how to build and support neurodiversity in the workplace.

New Business

None

The meeting went into executive session at 11:03 a.m.