

WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 23, 2018

The meeting held at the Edmonds Senior Center in Edmonds, Washington was called to order at 5:31 PM by Commission Chair Charlene Strong.

Commissioners Present were Charlene Strong, Clarence Henderson, Guadalupe Gamboa, and Skylee Sahlstrom.

Executive Director Sharon Ortiz, Deputy Director Cheryl Strobert, Assistant Attorney General Scott Douglas and Customer Service Specialist Deborah Gonzales, were present.

Draft minutes from the February 22, 2018 meeting were considered. The minutes were approved.

The following cases were pulled from the closures prior to the Commission Meeting: Ophelia Noble v. Kelso High School and Blanca Torres v. Washington Beef.

The case closures were approved.

Director Ortiz reported that Governor Inslee, which creates a new section in RCW 49.60, requiring that the Commission convene a stakeholder work group to develop model sexual harassment policies and best practices, signed SB 6471. Twenty-one thousand dollars is attached to this section to support this endeavor. The Governor signed several other sexual harassment bills yesterday.

HB 2822, amending the definition of service animal (dogs and miniature horses) under RCW 49.60 and misrepresentation of service animals is also expected to be signed by the Governor.

One reasonable cause finding was sent to the Attorney General's Office Civil Rights Division for conciliation and further processing. It is a service animal case in which an employee was not permitted to have her service animal in the yoga studio where she worked.

Three reasonable cause housing cases are ready for conciliation by the Civil Rights Division.

The EEOC contract is behind in terms of charge resolutions. Because our pending is low, we are looking at ways to remedy the shortfall. We are looking at new and additional outreach opportunities. We are in need of 71 cases per month in order to meet our goal for the EEOC in June.

Commissioner Gamboa reported that he is continuing to work on sexual harassment issues for farmworker women through the sexual harassment coalition group that has been meeting.

Commissioner Henderson reported that he attended the IAOHRA board meeting and stated the Human Rights Commission was cited as a model for other Commissions. The next IAOHRA conference will contain a Commissioner training module. He continues to speak in schools and various organizations about civil rights.

Commissioner Sahlstrom reported that she is joining the Race and Social Justice Initiative group that meets monthly in Seattle. She will report to the Commission once she starts attending those meetings.

Commissioner Strong reported that she attended the State of the City (Seattle) and that she is working to see if a neighborhood school will agree to the Commission holding a meeting at the school.

AAG Scott Douglas did not have anything to report at this time.

The April Commission meeting is a phone meeting. The May Commission meeting is in Yakima and will be held at the Southeast Community Center. The community will be invited to discuss discrimination issues. The Commission will reiterate that it does not collect information regarding immigration status when receiving and investigating complaints and further, the Governor's Executive Order prohibits inquiring about or collecting such information. A brochure will be prepared for distribution at the meeting.

Shon Gates-Wertman was present in the audience and is a Washington Leadership Institute Fellow seeking partnership with Farmworker communities. She is interested in partnering to develop a know your rights program for farmworkers.

There was no executive session held at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:56pm.