



Only Fair Is Fair.

MDCR/MCRC E-newsletter for December 21, 2011

Holland Commission announces Social Justice Award winners

From the Grand Rapids Press/MLive, 12/20/11

http://www.mlive.com/a2z/index.ssf/2011/12/holland_commission_announces_social_justice_award_winners.html

HOLLAND – The city of Holland’s Human Relations Commission will honor an organization that has campaigned for expanding the city’s anti-discrimination ordinance to include sexual orientation and gender identity, and remember a longtime community activist as part of its Social Justice Awards for this year.

Online petitioners condemn Great Expressions Dental for alleged harassment of HIV+ ex-employee

From Mlive, 12/20/11

http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2011/12/post_70.html

More than 2000 people have signed a Change.org online petition demanding the Great Expressions Dental Centers apologize and pay restitution for allegedly harassing an HIV positive former employee.

'Little Tokyo' thrives in Novi as Japanese population expands

From the Detroit News, 12/19/11

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20111219/METRO02/112190344/1409/metro/-Little-Tokyo-thrives- Novi-Japanese-population-expands>

Novi — From the containers of green tea ice cream and soba noodles at Kroger, to the slippers given to guests at Staybridge Suites, businesses are making changes to serve the expanding Japanese population here.

Cooley Law School to open immigrant rights clinic

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/18/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111218/NEWS06/111218002/Michigan-Cooley-Law-immigrant-rights>

Cooley Law School plans to open an immigrant rights and civil advocacy clinic at its Ann Arbor campus.

Christian, Muslim leaders protest in solidarity at Lowe's in Allen Park

From the Detroit News, 12/17/11

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20111217/METRO/112170373/-1/lifestyle14/Christian-Muslim-leaders-protest-solidarity-Lowe-s-Allen-Park>

Allen Park— Religious leaders, activists, elected officials and citizens expressed their anger at the company's withdrawal of advertising on a program about Arab-Americans living in nearby Dearborn during an interfaith protest at a Lowe's store Saturday.

Diverse group of supporters turns out for new Arab civil rights organization’s debut

From the Arab American News, 12/17/11

<http://www.arabamericannews.com/news/index.php?mod=article&cat=Community&article=5063>

Dearborn — A crowd of more than 300 attended the Arab American Civil Rights League's (ACRL) official launching reception at the city's Fairlane Club on Thursday.

Racism not reason for neglect along Saginaw highway, feds say

From the Saginaw News/MLive, 12/15/11

http://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw/index.ssf/2011/12/racism_not_reason_for_neglect.html

Saginaw — The Federal Highway Administration has not substantiated a racism claim filed by an East Side Saginaw resident against the Michigan Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration spokesman Doug Hecox says.

Howell woman sues after son allegedly gets kicked out of class for religious beliefs

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/15/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111215/NEWS06/111215007/Howell-woman-files-lawsuit-after-son-allegedly-kicked-out-of-class-for-religious-beliefs>

A Howell woman has filed a federal lawsuit against her school district and a high school teacher for kicking her son out of class in October 2010 because her son's religious beliefs prevent him from accepting homosexuality.

Judges OK tossing of \$4.4M verdict in disabled Army vet case

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/15/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111215/NEWS06/112150513/Judges-OK-tossing-4-4M-verdict-disabled-Army-vet-case?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

A federal appeals court upheld Wednesday a judge's decision to throw out a \$4.4-million jury verdict for an Army veteran who lost his hand while serving in Iraq -- only to be ridiculed about his disability by co-workers and a boss while working as a civilian Army employee.

Disabilities group's key goal for 2012: Build grassroots participation

From the Detroit News, 12/14/11

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20111214/LIFESTYLE03/112150301/1040/Disabilities-group-s-key-goal-2012-Building-grassroots-participation>

Recently, I spoke with Mark Perriello, the recently named CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). Located in Washington, D.C., AAPD is the nation's largest cross-disability organization and the preeminent disability policy group. We discussed the organization's priorities, the new anti-bullying campaign, and what issues to look out for in 2012.

Jehovah's Witness was discriminated against at Pittsfield Township nursing home, lawsuit alleges

From AnnArbor.com/MLive, 12/14/11

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/jehovahs-witness-was-discriminated-against-at-pittsfield-township-nursing-home-lawsuit-alleges/>

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is alleging in a federal lawsuit that a Pittsfield Township nursing home illegally fired a nursing assistant because she needed certain days of the week off to attend religious services as a Jehovah's Witness.

Guest Commentary: Lowe's should respect diversity of customers

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/13/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111213/OPINION05/312130007/Guest-commentary-Lowe-s-should-respect-diversity-customers-?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

Lowe's does not seem to have a problem with people of any race or religion buying everything from lumber to kitchen gadgets at its stores, even Arab-American Muslims.

Court to weigh Arizona statute on immigration

From the New York Times, 12/12/11

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/13/us/supreme-court-to-rule-on-immigration-law-in-arizona.html?_r=1&emc=na

Washington, DC — In the space of a month, the Supreme Court has thrust itself into the center of American political life, agreeing to hear three major cases that could help determine which party controls the House of Representatives and whether President Obama wins a second term.

Racism in Bay City typically subtle, officials say, despite Vet's Park incident

From the Bay City Times/MLive, 12/12/11

http://www.mlive.com/news/bay-city/index.ssf/2011/12/racism_in_bay_city_typically_s.html

Bay City — Racism is a subtle undercurrent that still runs through Bay City, but the community is not facing a crisis over race relations, according to local NAACP leaders.

Backlash for Lowe's as ads pulled from Dearborn-based 'All-American Muslim'

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/12/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111212/BUSINESS07/111212005/Backlash-Lowe-s-ads-pulled-from-All-American-Muslim-?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

Lowe's Home Improvement has found itself facing a backlash after the retail giant pulled ads from a reality show about American Muslims.

Brian Dickerson: Snyder's talent search aims for immigrants

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/11/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111211/COL04/112110438/Brian-Dickerson-Snyder-s-talent-search-aims-immigrants?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|Opinion>

On the last day of November, just a few hours before everything else he did that month was eclipsed by the disclosure that he was one step closer to appointing an emergency manager in Detroit, Rick Snyder delivered the fifth in a series of wonkish special messages that have become the signature of his gubernatorial tenure.

For 35 years, Peckham has offered more than just a job for disabled

From the Lansing State Journal, 12/10/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20111211/BUSINESS/112110365/For-35-years-Peckham-has-offered-more-than-just-job-disabled?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

Geraldine Rush got her first apartment last year - at age 62.

"I got dishes and I got a bed - my first bed," she said, holding back tears.

Rush, now 63, has been able to get her own place and a car in the 3-1/2 years since she was hired as a sewing machine operator at Peckham Inc. It was her first job in more than 20 years.

Trans woman wins in firing case

From Pride Source, 12/8/11

<http://www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=50615>

A three-judge panel of the conservative 11th Circuit U.S. Supreme Court of Appeals ruled Dec. 6 in favor of an employee of the Georgia General Assembly who was fired after telling a supervisor that she was undergoing male-to-female sex change treatment.

Guest commentary: Troy mayor's choice of words reveals unacceptable prejudice

From the Detroit Free Press, 12/8/11

<http://www.freep.com/article/20111208/OPINION05/112080586/Guest-commentary-Troy-mayor-s-choice-words-reveals-unacceptable-prejudice?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|s>

In law school, I was trained to pay attention to words. We were taught that when reviewing a law, the words themselves are the best evidence of what a legislature intended the law to mean.

Equality Michigan hate crimes talk tackles difficult subject

From Pride Source, 12/8/11

<http://www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=50599>

It's a subject that brings to light one of the very darkest examples of man's inhumanity toward man. About 50 people came out to a panel discussion on hate crimes last Wednesday. The discussion, which took place in the Spencer Patrich Auditorium of the Wayne State University Law School, was organized by Equality Michigan.

Former Ingham County road employee sues for racial discrimination

From the Lansing State Journal, 12/7/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20111207/NEWS01/312070021/Former-Ingham-County-road-employee-sues-racial-discrimination-?odyssey=tab|topnews>

Lansing – A former Ingham County Road Commission employee who was fired from his job has filed suit against four Road Commission board members, claiming he was discriminated against because he is white.

Saline High School student charged with ethnic intimidation

From Ann Arbor.com/MLive, 12/7/11

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/crime/saline-high-school-student-charged-with-ethnic-intimidation/>

A Saline High School student is accused of ethnic intimidation after he allegedly called another student a terrorist and then punched him in the face, police said.

Okemos schools' change draws support, some ire

From the LSJ, 12/6/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20111206/NEWS01/112060317/Okemos-schools-change-draws-support-some-ire?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE>

Okemos– Pat Dyer-Deckrow doesn't want stereotypical images of American Indians perpetuated as fact.

Civil Rights Celebrating Upcoming Bullying Legislation Signing

From MIRS, 12/5/11 (no link available)

Gov. Rick SNYDER tomorrow will sign anti-bullying legislation after a bumpy legislative road that included a "guttred" Senate version, national coverage and satire.

MIRS today asked Department of Civil Rights (DCR) Director Dan KRICHBAUM whether the state and its legislators had taken heat nationally for the fumbles in this legislation, which requires school districts to create a bullying policy.

"The Senate version? Absolutely. I think they got some commentary back from local organizations and from some local people, but I think they also appeared in some national press. And so yeah, I think that

would be pretty concerning for them. I think they did take a hit on that," said Krichbaum.

But DCR Chief Legal Officer Dan LEVY said that overall, the bullying legislation was "really, really good news."

"The end result I think is a very positive if imperfect product," said Levy.

The imperfection, in the department's view, is the lack of enumerations. DCR has testified that getting the legislation through was important, and that perhaps enumerations could come later (See "Talk But No Action On Bullying Legislation," 6/29/2011).

But Levy said today there isn't a timeline or agenda yet for pushing enumerations.

"It would make it stronger, but we don't have any special legislative effort to make it change now," said Levy.

Another provision the department is disappointed with is where the policy came down on cyber bullying. Schools only have to have a policy for cyber bullying that takes place on school grounds or with school equipment.

"The school boards were more concerned about the liability that might be created than they were with the importance of recognizing the fact that it does affect the school and is something that needs to be addressed," said Levy.

He said the policy should address students who are cyber-bullied over the weekend and not from school directly, as any bullying follows a child to school. He said that the cyber bullying issue is something Snyder has expressed an interest in working on further.

Department Looking At First Funding Increase In Many Years

Department of Civil Rights (DCR) financial analyst Leslee FRITZ said today that the Department is asking for a modest funding increase in Fiscal Year (FY) '13.

"We feel like FY '13 may, for the first time in a long time, be slightly larger than the year that came before it," said Fritz.

For FY '12, the MDCR has \$200,000 in a proposed supplemental that would fund the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, which is currently all voluntary, at the same level as the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan.

The Department also had \$400,000 returned back to the General Fund from FY '11, mainly due to staff turnover.

New director of Kalamazoo's Gay and Lesbian Resource Center seeks collaboration

From the Kalamazoo Gazette/MLive, 12/4/11

http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/12/new_director_of_kalamazoos_gay.html

Kalamazoo — Despite victories for the local gay, lesbian and transgender community during the past few years, there is still much work that needs to be done to ensure the group's equality, protection and inclusion, the new executive director of the Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center said.

Pregnancy discrimination lingers in workplaces

From the Lansing State Journal, 12/4/11

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20111205/BUSINESS/112050310/Pregnancy-discrimination-lingers-workplaces?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|p>

By now, researcher Cynthia Calvert says, most employers know enough about the law and gender discrimination to at least avoid the appearance of bias against women.

New federal policy supports considering race in college admissions practices

From AnnArbor.com/MLive, 12/2/11

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/federal-government-supports-considering-race-in-admissions-practices-with-new-policy/>

The U.S. Departments of Justice and Education today announced that they support factoring race into admissions policies at public universities.

48% Of Students Sexual Harassed In '10-'11

From MIRS, 12/2/11 (no link available)

Sexual harassment is a problem in Michigan schools and experts say little is done about it.

Under Title IX, the federal law that deals with sexual harassment, schools are required to have a policy that covers such discrimination, said Brad BANASIK, legal counsel for the Michigan Association of School Boards. Schools have reporting requirements and a legal obligation to end the harassment.

Banasik said suspensions and expulsions are common ways sexual harassment is dealt with in schools.

Despite the federal law, a national study found that 48 percent of students in grades 7 through 12 experienced sexual harassment in the 2010-2011 school year.

The study released by the American Association of University Women said that 56 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys reported that fellow students had sexually harassed them. Sexual harassment in schools can include unwanted touching, sexual comments or harassment based on sexual orientation.

"From my experience in Michigan I would find the study to be in line with what I've experienced and what I've observed," said Glenn STUZKY, a clinical instructor of social work at Michigan State University.

Stutzky said despite the Title IX obligations, not much is done about the problem.

"I think unfortunately where we're at with student-to-student sexual harassment is that it has become the way that it is," Stutzky said. "It's become part of the fabric of their existence in schools, which is a really sad comment."

The statistics show that while schools may have policies on the books, they're not proving to be effective, Stutzky said.

"I think the research speaks for itself," said Sally DOTY, president of the American Association of University Women of Michigan. "We need to get this research into the hands of the school administrators, teachers and parents."

Doty said the best thing schools could do is look at the suggestions made by students in the study because they are the ones affected. The most common student suggestions were to allow problems to be reported anonymously, improve enforcement of sexual harassment policies and punish harassers.

Anti-bullying legislation has been moving through the Michigan Legislature but sexual harassment is not outlined in that statute because of Title IX, said Scott HENDRICKSON, legislative aide for Sen. Glenn [ANDERSON] (D-Westland). Anderson has been outspoken about the anti-bullying legislation, saying it doesn't go far enough to protect kids.

Acts of bullying and sexual harassment are very similar, Stutzky said.

"In their essence I don't think there is any difference because they're both about power and control," he said.

Stutzky said it is vital that schools take a serious look at reforming their sexual harassment policies. He said in-service programs, open discussions and stiffer penalties for harassers would help with the problem.

"We really need to get it on our agenda at schools on a school-by-school basis," he said. "It needs to be something that we make as a talkable subject among students, faculty and staff."

Students who are the target of sexual harassment often lose sleep, have eating problems and struggle with academics, Stutzky said. With people in constant connection through the Internet and social networks the problem has only gotten worse.

Okemos Drops Chiefs Logo

From WILX (Channel 10, Lansing), 12/2/11

<http://www.wilx.com/home/headlines/134853613.html>

Okemos – For some, there is a nostalgia surrounding the old Okemos Chieftains logo.

"I've been used to having that logo represent us," said long-time Okemos boys basketball coach Dan Stolz. "I think it's been a majestic, proud logo."

Rick Snyder to lobby Congress for federal immigration reform for talented immigrants: 'It's the right thing to do'

From Ann Arbor.com/MLive, 12/1/11

<http://www.annarbor.com/business-review/rick-snyder-to-lobby-congress-for-federal-immigration-reform-for-talented-immigrants-its-the-right-t/>

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder said today that he would jump into the national debate over U.S. immigration law, describing the recruitment of talented immigrants as an economic opportunity for the state.

MSU study: Minorities pay more for water, sewer utilities

From MLive, 11/30/11

http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2011/11/msu_study_minorities_pay_more.html

Racial minorities are paying more than white people for water and sewer utilities, MSU researchers suggest.

Coincidence, pattern or attack?

From City Pulse, 11/30/11

<http://www.lansingcitypulse.com/lansing/article-6679-coincidence-pattern-or-attack.html>

If it was a game, Gretchen Whitmer won. Just ask Rick Jones.

When Jones, a Republican state senator from Grand Ledge, gives his side of the anti-bullying saga that took place at the Capitol four weeks ago, he blames Democrats — namely Whitmer, the Democrats' Senate leader — for staging what turned out to be a national media frenzy.

Mount Pleasant residents push for anti-discrimination ordinance

From CMU Life, 11/30/11

<http://www.cm-life.com/2011/11/30/mount-pleasant-residents-push-for-anti-discrimination-ordinance/>

When Norma Bailey asked for people at Monday's City Commission meeting to stand if they supported establishing an anti-discrimination law, the majority of the room rose to its feet.

School bullying: Did district miss cries for help?

From The Indianapolis Star (Indystar.com), 11/30/11

<http://www.indystar.com/article/20111130/LOCAL/111300324/School-bullying-Did-district-miss-cries-help-?odyssey=nav|head>

FISHERS – Didn't anyone notice what was happening to Jamarcus Bell?

Didn't any students, teachers or administrators see pieces of metal thrown at the 14-year-old during a welding class? Didn't they hear the painful anti-gay slurs thrown at him in the hallways?