

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, October 8, 2018 ~ 1:00 P.M.
Crowne Plaza Grand Rapids Airport, 5700 28th St. SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

MINUTES

PRESENT: Commission Co-Chair Mumtaz Haque
Commission Co-Chair Laura Reyes-Kopack
Commission Secretary Rasha Demashkieh
Commissioner Ira Combs, Jr.
Commissioner Ricardo Resio
Commissioner Jeffrey Sakwa
Commissioner Alma Wheeler Smith

EXCUSED: Commissioner Stacie Clayton

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was Called to Order at 1:10 p.m. by Commissioner Reyes-Kopack. Roll Call of the Commissioners was taken to determine a quorum. Commissioner Resio, Commissioner Demashkieh, Commissioner Reyes-Kopack, Commissioner Combs, Commissioner Sakwa, Commissioner Smith. With six of eight commissioners present, quorum requirements were met. Co-Chair Haque arrived later at 1:20 p.m.

AMENDMENT OF MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Amend the Meeting Agenda by moving Agenda Item 11 (Public Comment) to follow Agenda Item 3 (Adoption of Consent Agenda), add to Item10 a resolution for William “Bill” Brooks, and a discussion on the letter from the Immigration Rights Center. Following discussion, the following Motion was brought forth: **On Motion duly made (Commissioner Smith) and supported (Commissioner Combs), the Amendments of the Meeting Agenda were Approved.** *Motion carried unanimously.*

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Adopt Consent Agenda as presented. Following discussion, the following Motion was brought forth: **On Motion duly made (Commissioner Combs) and supported (Commissioner Demashkieh), the Consent Agenda was Adopted.** *Motion carried unanimously.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Sean Bennett brought concerns regarding the Commission's supervisory role of the Department.

Pastor Daniel Allen Schutte brought concerns regarding abortion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM July 23, 2018 MEETING

MOTION: Move to Approve the Minutes from July 23, 2018 Meeting as submitted. Following discussion, the following Motion was brought forth: **On Motion duly made**

(Commissioner Smith) and supported (Commissioner Combs), the Minutes were Approved. *Motion carried unanimously.*

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Agustin V. Arbulu provided status updates on the Department's activity.

COMMISSION MATTERS

- **CO-CHAIR REPORT**
Commissioner Reyes-Kopack provided a status update on Commission activity, including appointing a nominating committee for the 2019 Election of Officers in January as well as the Commission Committees.
- **ATTORNEY GENERAL REPORT**
Assistant Attorney General Ron Robinson provided a status update on current cases.
- **COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS**
This agenda item was waived.
- **UPDATE: PERSONNEL MATTERS**
Commissioner Resio provided recommendations to the Commission on a compensation increase for the executive director, commensurate with unclassified state employee increases of 3% in 2017 and 1.96% in 2018, effective October 1, 2018. Following discussion, the following Motion was set forth.
MOTION: Move to Approve a salary increase of 4.96% for the executive director. On Motion duly made (Commissioner Demashkieh) and supported (Commissioner Smith), the Executive Director's salary increase of 4.96% was Approved. *Motion carried unanimously.* An extension of the E.D.'s contract will be taken into consideration following the results of the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Dan Levy provided updates on the Administrative Rules changes. Annie Urasky provided updates on the "Not Without Us" campaign/survey by DODDBHH. No actions were taken by the Commission on either item.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution – Support for Francis Anwana remaining in the U.S., Commissioner Smith

Whereas, Francis Anwana ("Mr. Anwana") was born in Nigeria 48 years ago, and
Whereas, Mr. Anwana was born deaf and with cognitive impairments, and
Whereas, finding that there were no programs for the deaf in Nigeria and observing that his son was being subjected to harassment because of his disabilities, Mr. Anwana's father first brought his son to the United States at age 13, and
Whereas, growing up, Mr. Anwana attended the Lutheran School for the Deaf in Michigan, and later the Michigan School for the Deaf, where he learned American Sign Language, which remains his only effective means of communication, and
Whereas, after Mr. Anwana's father passed away in 2012, he continued to live in supportive living situations as he had previous to that time. At no time has he hidden or tried to evade authorities and he has reported regularly to immigration officials as required, and

Whereas, due to Mr. Anwana's disabilities, he lacks understanding of the concept of immigration status and his advocates and caregivers were unable to secure stable, permanent immigration status for him when his student status ended, and

Whereas, Mr. Anwana's advocates have continued to attempt to obtain necessary documents permitting him to remain in this country, those efforts have not yet been successful. Still, Mr. Anwana has fully cooperated by making annual appearances before immigration officials, and

Whereas, Mr. Anwana voluntarily appeared at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices when summoned by letter on September 6, 2018, and was informed that he was to return in five days to be deported, and

Whereas, ICE officials recently granted a stay of removal of Mr. Anwana for a period of twelve (12) months in light of the extenuating circumstances, and

Whereas, it appears Mr. Anwana, who has cognitive difficulty understanding the full complexity and seriousness of his situation under the best of circumstances, has (likely in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act) not been provided by the government with a certified interpreter when meeting with ICE officials and answering questions or being provided instruction, and has instead been required to "bring his own" interpreter, and

Whereas, deporting Mr. Anwana to Nigeria would almost certainly have catastrophic consequences for him as his only means of communication is in American Sign Language. Further, his cognitive challenges not only make acquiring a new language (Nigerian Sign Language) exceptionally problematic, they render him unable to fully understand the implications of being relocated, and incapable of providing the necessities for a new life in what to him is a foreign country, and

Whereas, the State Department issued in early 2018 a travel advisory (the third of four levels) to Nigeria and deporting Mr. Anwana to Nigeria will expose Mr. Anwana to serious physical danger such as assault, rape, kidnapping, terrorism and piracy.

It is therefore resolved that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission calls upon officials at every level of state and federal government to recognize the unique situation presented by Mr. Anwana's deafness, his cognitive disability, and his lack of personal responsibility for the failure to properly renew his documentation, and take all actions necessary to permit Mr. Anwana to remain permanently in Michigan and live his life free from the dangers to his health, safety and wellbeing that would be presented by a forced relocation to a country he does not know and that the United States Department of State considers to present serious risks to personal safety and security.

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Resolution in support of Francis Anwana remaining in the U.S. On Motion duly made (Commissioner Demashkieh) and supported (Commissioner Smith), the Resolution in support of Francis Anwana remaining in the U.S. was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution – Honoring the Life of William C. "Bill" Brooks, Commissioner Combs

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks was a committed advocate for civil rights throughout his entire life, and

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks spent a lifetime of service to his country and community which began with his career as an officer in the United States Air Force, from which he retired in 1972, and

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks worked for the federal Office of Management and Budget as an operations research analyst during the presidential administration of Richard M. Nixon, and

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks worked at General Motors in the 70s and 90s, and
Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks was nominated to serve as the undersecretary for Labor by President George H.W. Bush, and did serve in that position from 1989 until 1991, and

Whereas, in the 90s, when William C. "Bill" Brooks rejoined General Motors as vice president of corporate affairs, he also served as chairman of the General Motors Foundation and chairman of the board and president of Motor Enterprises, Inc., a small business investment subsidiary of General Motors, and

Whereas, President William J. Clinton appointed William C. "Bill" Brooks to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board from 1995 to 1998, and

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks retired from General Motors in 1997, and

Whereas, during his tenure at General Motors, William C. "Bill" Brooks led the fight to secure equitable access to contracts for small businesses owned by African-American entrepreneurs, and

Whereas, in addition to years of corporate and government service and leadership, William C. "Bill" Brooks spent countless hours creating and nurturing many civic organizations including being a founding member of the National Black MBA Association's Detroit chapter, founding chairman of the Michigan Black Chamber of Commerce, and served time as a member of the boards of the Michigan Opera Theatre and the Music Hall Center for Performing Arts, and

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks was a fierce advocate for education particularly for the youth of Detroit, demonstrated by his service on the Detroit Public Schools as a member and chair; and

Whereas, William C. "Bill" Brooks leaves a lasting legacy of striving for equity, equality and success for Detroit, Michigan and the United States,

Therefore, Now Be It Resolved, that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission commemorates William C. "Bill" Brooks' life and contributions to the state and beyond, and

Further, Be It Resolved, the Commission recognizes the lasting legacy of William C. "Bill" Brooks on business, government and charitable organizations across the United States, and

Be It Further Resolved, that Commission expresses its deepest condolences to his wife of 62 years, Elizabeth; his three children William C. Brooks, Jr., Patricia Elizabeth Brooks and Pamela (Peter) Tully; his eight grandchildren and four great children; and

Finally, Be It Resolved on this 8th Day of October 2018, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission honors and recognizes, lauds and applauds the legacy left for all Michiganders to follow by the life of William C. "Bill" Brooks.

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Resolution honoring the life of William C. "Bill" Brooks. On Motion duly made (Commissioner Combs) and supported (Commissioner Sakwa), the Resolution honoring the life of William C. "Bill" Brooks was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

Request from Michigan Immigration Rights Center to provide public comment by November 6th regarding rules pertaining to children being separated from parents detained at the border, Commissioner Smith

Following discussion, the following Motion was brought forth.

MOTION: Move to Direct the Department to weigh-in/prepare public comment and submit on behalf of the Commission and the Department in a timely manner (before November 6, 2018). On Motion duly made (Commissioner Smith) and supported (Commissioner Demashkieh), the Motion was Approved. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

There was no Commissioner comment.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to Adjourn the meeting. On Motion duly made (Commissioner Kopack) and supported (Commissioner Haque), the meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission at 2:45 P.M. was Adjourned. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Next meeting scheduled for November 19, 2018 in Detroit; location and time to be determined.

Secretary

Executive Director