

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Meeting of the Commission
February 11, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Michael A. Bilandic Building
160 North LaSalle Street, Suite N-1000
Chicago, Illinois 60601

and

Jefferson Terrace
300 West Jefferson Street, Suite 108
Springfield, Illinois 62702

MINUTES

PRESENT

Commissioners: Selma C. D'Souza, Chair
Demoya R. Gordon, Vice Chair
Jacqueline Y. Collins
Janice M. Glenn
Stephen A. Kouri II
Mony Ruiz-Velasco (via Webex)
Gregory E. Vaci

Staff: David R. Larson, Interim Executive Director and General Counsel
Brian Weinthal, Chief Administrative Law Judge
Pamela Curran, Administrative Law Judge
Bonnie Kim, Deputy General Counsel
Adrian J. Atwater, Assistant General Counsel
Emily Curosh, Assistant General Counsel
Jaz Park, Assistant General Counsel
Shantelle Baker, Administrative Assistant I
Bricia Herrera, Administrative Assistant I
Christine Welninski, Administrative Assistant I
Michelle Crayton, Private Secretary
Cecilia Torres, Office Coordinator

Members of the Public: Oral Bennett
David Rothal
Dipesh Singla
Michael Vernon

I. Call to Order

A meeting of the Illinois Human Rights Commission was called to order on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. by Chair D'Souza.

II. Roll Call

Pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1 *et seq.*, it was determined that:

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Chair D'Souza, Vice Chair Gordon, and Commissioners Collins, Glenn, Kouri, and Vaci were physically present at the meeting.

III. Minutes – December 3, 2025

The Commissioners adopted the minutes of the December 3, 2025 meeting as submitted by staff. Motion made by Vice Chair Gordon; seconded by Commissioner Collins. Motion carried 6-0-0.

IV. Chair's Report

Chair D'Souza discussed recent outreach events at the DePaul University Winter Welcome Fair for International Students and the DuPage Foundation Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast. Chair D'Souza also noted that Commissioners Collins and Glenn will present to students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Gies College of Business, and Administrative Law Judge Jennifer Nolen will participate in the Black Women Lawyers' Association's "Road to the Robe" Panel Discussion.

V. Staff Reports

A. David R. Larson, Interim Executive Director and General Counsel

Interim Executive Director and General Counsel Larson submitted a written report prior to the meeting. General Counsel Larson reviewed the number of cases pending before the Commissioners, promoted an upcoming "Lunch and Learn" continuing legal education presentation, addressed the forthcoming distribution of the 2026 Statement of Economic Interests, and provided an update on the implementation of the electronic timekeeping system. General Counsel Larson also responded to a question regarding proposed legislation to amend the Illinois Human Rights Act..

B. Claudia P. Ortega, Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer

Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer Ortega submitted a written report prior to the meeting. In Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer Ortega's absence, Interim Executive Director and General Counsel Larson reported that Governor Pritzker will deliver the 2026 State of the State and Budget Address on February 18, 2026. General Counsel Larson also confirmed that the Governor's Office of Management and Budget tentatively approved the Commission's "maintenance" budget request for Fiscal Year 2027.

C. Brian Weinthal, Chief Administrative Law Judge

Chief Administrative Law Judge Weinthal submitted a written report prior to the meeting. Chief Administrative Law Judge Weinthal reviewed updated case statistics, discussed the application process for the Coles Fellowship, and announced a project with the Illinois Office of Communication and Information to produce instructional videos for litigants appearing before the Administrative Law Section. Chief Administrative Law Judge Weinthal also responded to questions regarding stipends for Coles Fellows, proposed legislation to permit the award of punitive damages under the Illinois Human Rights Act, and statistics on cases involving newly added protected classes under the Act. During the discussion, Chair D'Souza noted that the Commission's Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report is now available on the Commission's website.

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VI. Petition for Rehearing En Banc

- A. Rashon Synder vs. Chicago Transit Authority
Charge No.: 2023CR1425 ALS No.: 23-0297

The Commissioners denied the Complainant's Petition for Rehearing En Banc. Motion made by Commissioner Glenn; seconded by Commissioner Vaci. Motion carried 6-0-0.

VII. Unfinished Business

None.

VIII. New Business

- A. Commissioner Outreach

Chair D'Souza reported meeting with the Chair of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights to discuss coordination on future outreach events and noted the possibility of a future partnership with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

IX. Public Comments

None.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m. Motion made by Commissioner Collins; seconded by Vice Chair Gordon. Motion carried 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David R. Larson
General Counsel
Illinois Human Rights Commission