

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Meeting of the Commission
April 8, 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
Gregory E. Vaci

Staff: David R. Larson, Interim Executive Director and General Counsel
Claudia P. Ortega, Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer
Brian Weinthal, Chief Administrative Law Judge
Azeema Akram, Deputy Chief Administrative Law Judge
Pamela Curran, Administrative Law Judge
Bonnie Kim, Deputy 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: Remi Ajala
Oral Bennett
David Rothal
Dipesh Singla
Michael Vernon
Audrey Walling

I. Call to Order

A meeting of the Illinois Human Rights Commission was called to order on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. by Chair D'Souza.

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II. Roll Call

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

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

III. Minutes – February 11, 2026

The Commissioners adopted the minutes of the February 11, 2026 meeting as submitted by staff. Motion made by Commissioner Glenn; seconded by Vice Chair Gordon. Motion carried 7-0-0.

IV. Chair's Report

Chair D'Souza reported that the Commission testified in support of its proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget before both the House and Senate Appropriations-Health and Human Services Committees. Chair D'Souza also noted that the Governor's Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget proposed a merger of the Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Rights. The Office of the General Counsel will provide regular updates to the Commissioners on this proposal and other legislation amending the Illinois Human Rights Act. Finally, Chair D'Souza congratulated Chief Administrative Law Judge Weinthal on receiving the 2025 Hon. Thomas L. Kilbride (Ret.) Judicial Access to Justice Award.

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, highlighted an upcoming "Lunch and Learn" continuing legal education presentation, and reminded the Commissioners of the deadline for filing their 2026 Statement of Economic Interest and Supplemental Statement of Economic Interest. General Counsel Larson also reported that the Commission successfully launched the new electronic timekeeping system on April 1, 2026.

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. Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer Ortega provided an update on the current headcount, vacant positions, and available funds for the remainder of the fiscal year. Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer Ortega also responded to questions about the estimated budget lapse and the need for future budget reserves.

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, confirmed the selection of three law students for the Coles Fellowship, and provided an update on the instructional videos for litigants appearing before the Administrative Law Section. Chief Administrative Law Judge Weinthal also responded to questions about a decline in the number of settlements, proposed legislation establishing procedures for issuing right-to-sue notices, and language access services and other resources for self-represented litigants.

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VI. Unfinished Business

None.

VII. New Business

A. Commissioner Outreach

Chair D'Souza reported that she, Vice Chair Gordon, and Commissioner Ruiz-Velasco will meet with the Illinois Department of Human Rights to coordinate future outreach efforts. Chair D'Souza also reported on recent outreach events at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, North Park University, and the 3rd Annual Asian Women's Summit. Finally, Chair D'Souza outlined plans to update and enhance the Commission's outreach materials.

VIII. Public Comments

None.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m. Motion made by Commissioner Ruiz-Velasco; seconded by Commissioner Collins. Motion carried 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David R. Larson
General Counsel
Illinois Human Rights Commission