

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Meeting of the Commission
August 5, 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
Pamela Curran, Administrative Law Judge
Kathleen McGee, Administrative Law Judge
Jennifer Nolen, Administrative Law Judge
Bonnie Kim, Deputy General Counsel
Adrian 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
Cecilia Torres, Office Coordinator
Brenna Colihan, Edward Coles Fellow
Sara Schlecht, Edward Coles Fellow

Members of the Public:	Anthony	David Rothal
	Jerry Bauer	Deena Sanceda
	Grace	Michael Vernon
	Paul	Audrey Walling

I. Call to Order

A meeting of the Illinois Human Rights Commission was called to order on Wednesday, August 5, 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 – June 3, 2026

Commissioner Glenn requested a change to the minutes of the June 3, 2026 meeting submitted by staff. The Commissioners then adopted the minutes as amended. Motion made by Commissioner Collins; seconded by Vice Chair Gordon. Motion carried 7-0-0.

IV. Chair's Report

Chair D'Souza thanked the Edward Coles Fellows for their hard work over the summer and wished them luck in their future careers.

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 gave an update on the number of cases pending before the Commissioners and solicited topic and speaker ideas for future "Lunch and Learn" continuing legal education presentations. General Counsel Larson also reminded the Commissioners to complete the Ethics Training Program, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Training, and their other annual mandatory trainings before the end of the calendar year. Finally, General Counsel Larson discussed a proposed amendment to the Commission's Procedural Rules that will allow the remote attendance of a Commissioner when a physical quorum is otherwise available.

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 confirmed the transfer of two administrative staff to the Department of Human Rights pursuant to HB0862 and a corresponding reduction in the Commission's headcount. Chief Financial and Human Resources Officer Ortega also responded to a question about available funds in Fiscal Year 2026 following the payment of pending invoices during the lapse period.

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 reported on the increase in new complaint filings and noted that he received an invitation to present on mediation strategy at a continuing legal education program through Pincus Professional Education.

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VI. Unfinished Business

None.

VII. New Business

A. Election of Vice Chair

Chair D'Souza opened the floor to nominations for the Vice Chair position. Commissioner Kouri nominated himself. After ensuring there were no further nominations, Chair D'Souza declared Commissioner Kouri elected as the Vice Chair by acclamation.

B. Commissioner Outreach

Chair D'Souza reminded the Commissioners and staff to save the date for the "Human Rights Day" program on December 9, 2026. Chair D'Souza noted that Commissioners Gordon and Ruiz-Velasco gave a presentation on promoting respect and dignity through inclusive language to the Department of Human Rights in June and she thanked the Commissioners and staff who participated in the Chicago Disability Pride Parade in July. Chair D'Souza also discussed establishing a separate Outreach and Communications Committee to formalize the Commission's outreach efforts and requested assistance in developing a new biannual newsletter. Finally, Vice Chair Kouri made a detailed statement opposing Commissioners' participation in outreach activities with the Illinois Department of Human Rights, citing several potential conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts to the public. The Vice Chair stated that House Bill 0862 did not change the role of a Commissioner, emphasizing that a Commissioner's sole responsibility is to adjudicate cases. Commissioner Collins raised the issue of whether the Commission and Commissioners were being targeted.

VIII. Public Comments

None.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m. Motion made by Commissioner Glenn; seconded by Commissioner Collins. Motion carried 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

David R. Larson
General Counsel
Illinois Human Rights Commission