

**Minutes of the Cook County
Commission on Human Rights – Open Session
May 05, 2025 at 3:00 pm**

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Location: 69 W Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602
22nd floor, Conference Room A

Attendance:

Present: Chair Sufyan Soheli, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma, DHRE Staff.

Absent: Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

Open Session

A. Call to Order

- Chair Soheli called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

B. Statements by the General Public

W.L. submitted a written comment to the Commission requesting their complaint be investigated and disciplinary action taken. * Comment available at the end of the meeting minutes.

C. Agenda Approval

- A motion to approve the agenda was made by Vice Chair Gia Orr and seconded by Commissioner Jack Block. The motion was carried by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Soheli, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

D. Approval of the March 6, 2025 Regular Meeting Open Minutes

- A motion to approve the March 6, 2025 regular meeting open minutes was made by Commissioner Jack Block and seconded by Commissioner Michael Lapinski. The motion was carried by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Soheli, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

E. Commissioners' Updates.

- No updates.

F. Introduction of New Department Staff

- Human Rights Commissioners and DHRE staff introduced themselves.

G. Director's Report

- Director King provided updates on FY25 Q2 with two-thirds of the quarter complete. The number of cases pending at all stages has increased from the last quarter. 251 new inquiries, 44 new cases filed, 23 cases closed which is an increase from 19 closed last quarter. 5 cases settled thus far, increase from the 1 case settled last quarter. Known settlement of \$2,375.
- Policy: Cook County Board of Commissioners approved the proposed amendments to the Cook County Paid Leave Procedural Rules on April 10, 2025. The approved rule amendments are available here: [Paid Leave Ordinance and Regulations](#). On March 13, 2025 the definition of “national origin” within the Human Rights Ordinance was amended including but not limited to associated physical, cultural or linguistic characteristics aligning with the State and City definitions. The Commission on Human Rights is working on related guidance for potential instances of discrimination. The Roosevelt University Just Housing Amendment Impact Assessment closed on April 30, 2025. On April 10, 2025 Item # 25-2344 was introduced to the Cook County Board of Commissioners. The Resolution asks the Commission on Human Rights to present at an upcoming hearing on May 14, 2025 regarding the Wage Theft Ordinance, which the Commission is not the enforcement agency of, but the Commission will testify regarding other labor related complaints that we received.
- Outreach: One of the Outreach and Training coordinators provided updates on events and trainings attended to continue departmental efforts to spread awareness of Cook County Human Rights and Ethics ordinances and protections. Specifically, highlights on the Removing Barriers panel discussion that the Commission hosted on April 22nd in honor of Fair Housing and Second Chance month regarding the impact of the Just Housing Amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance. Highlight on the Commissions expansion of their outreach capabilities regarding language access by providing a worker protection training in English, Spanish and Mandarin. The Commission is currently preparing materials for the July 2025 Minimum Wage updates, an ordinance the Commission enforces. Human Rights newsletter increased to 2,305 subscribers.
- Intention to revitalize the Commission Workgroups. More information regarding structure and goals will be shared with the Commission via email.
- Chair and Vice Chair elections will take place at the next Commission meeting on July 17, 2025.

H. Human Rights Annual Report – Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve the 2024 Human Rights Annual was made by Vice Chair Gia Orr and seconded by Commissioner Michael Lapinski. The motion was carried by the following vote:
 - **Ayes**: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
 - **Nays**: None
 - **Absent**: Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

I. Investigation Extension Request – Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve Investigation Extension Requests 2024E00106, 2024E00092, 2024H00108, 2023CS004, 2024PL00185, 2024E00136, 2024H00124, 2024E00119, 2024E00114, 2024E00109, 2024E00095, 2025E00186, 2025E00188 was made by Vice Chair Gia Orr and seconded by Commissioner Michael Lapinski. The motion was carried by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock
 - **Note:** Questions raised by Commissioner Jack Black on why some were requesting a third extension were addressed in Closed session. Commission staff hope to mitigate the large number of cases due to the increase of staff.

Closed Session

- A motion to move into the Executive Session for discussions as identified in the agenda was made by Commissioner Hedy Ratner and seconded by Commissioner Michael Lapinski and carried out by unanimous voice vote at 3:33 pm.

Open Session

- At 3:53 pm the Commission reconvened to Open Session.
- During closed session DJHRE staff addressed a Commission question as to why some investigations were requesting a third extension. Due to workload and limited resources, it takes more time to complete investigations. DHRE has recently onboarded one new investigator and two new associate investigators that will eventually assist with complaints filed with the Commission. DHRE is hopeful that the increase of personnel will ensure timeliness of investigation completions.

M. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items, if any

a. March 6, 2025 Regular Closed Meeting Minutes – Commission Vote

- A motion to approve the March 6, 2025, Regular Closed Meeting Minutes was made by Vice Chair Gia Orr and seconded by Commissioner Michael Lapinski. The motion was carried by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

b. December 2024 – March 2025 Regular Closed Meeting Minutes – Commission Vote

- A motion to make public the December 2024 and March 2025 Regular Closed Meeting Minutes was made by Commissioner Jack Block and seconded Vice Chair Gia Orr. The motion was carried by the following vote:

- **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
- **Nays:** None
- **Absent:** Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

c. 2021E005 Administrative Law Judge Recommendation – Commission Vote

- A motion to adopt the recommendations made by the Administrative Law Judge was made by Vice Chair Orr and seconded by Commissioner Michael Lapinski. The motion was carried by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Vice Chair Gia Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Commissioners Rev. Richard Tolliver and Amber Smock

N. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Michael Lapinski, seconded by Commissioner Jack Block and carried by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 pm.

Minutes submitted by Commission staff.

*Subject attorney: Russell Wirbicki -The Wirbicki Law Group Kevin Hudspeth -Maurice Wutscher, Dinsmore & Shohl LLP Daniel Miller -Maurice Wutscher Daniel Moeller -Dinsmore & Shohl LLP Ernest p wagner -Maurice Wutscher, Hill Wallack LLP I am writing to allege misconduct during Attorneys representation of others (BNY) in cases numbered 1:23-cv-02031 and 2012ch29443 (1-23-0296) Failing to disclose relevant facts Making partially true but misleading statements Omitting information that is equivalent to an affirmative false statement Offering evidence that the lawyer knows is false Attorneys failed to file and waiver the BNY and document Filing Notification of Affiliates, These missed deadlines have caused delays in my cases and harassment and order default. This situation has caused us significant hardship, as we are unable to access our home. I have attached copies of emails sent to the authorities as evidence of my claims. I request that this complaint be investigated and that appropriate disciplinary action be taken.