

NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL

March 12, 2001 Interim Report

Presented To

GOVERNOR JAMES E. McGREEVEY

And The

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Human Relations Council (Council) was created by the New Jersey Legislature in 1997 as a permanent, independent body to “promote prejudice reduction education and address the problem of bias and violent acts based on the victim’s race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or disability.”¹ The Council is “in but not of” the Department of Law and Public Safety which, at the direction of the Attorney General, provides administrative assistance to the Council in the performance of its statutory duties and power.

The Council first convened as a public body on September 30, 1999. The bi-monthly meetings of the Council are held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. In its first year of operation, the Council has adopted its by-laws, elected officers, constituted working committees, established short and long term goals and objectives and embarked upon a variety of initiatives.

The statute forming the Council directs that the Council submit a biennial report to the Governor and Legislature.² However, the Council has determined that an Interim Report to the Governor is warranted and appropriate in order to set forth the many steps already taken by the Council and to outline its future plans to accomplish the important responsibilities delegated to the Council on behalf of the citizens of the State of New Jersey.

Accordingly, on [this 12th day](#) of March in the year 2001, this Interim Report is presented to Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco and the New Jersey Legislature by the New Jersey Human Relations Council.

¹ N.J.S.A. 52:9DD-8

² N.J.S.A. 52:9DD-9f.

COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The Council consists of an executive committee comprised of ten (10) public members representative of various racial, ethnic, gender and religious backgrounds, two (2) members of the General Assembly, two (2) members of the Senate, seven (7) representatives from county human relations commissions and fifteen (15) ex officio members. The following persons presently appointed or designated to serve on the Council:

Executive Committee Members

Name	Appointment	Term Exp.	County	
Ms. Jacqueline B. Kates	Governor/Public Member		11/17/01	Bergen
Rev. Collin Days, Sr.	Governor/Public Member		09/29/01	Atlantic
Dr. Robert A. Freda	Governor/Public Member		09/29/01	Somerset
Mr. Lucious Harvey	Governor/Public Member		09/29/01	Camden
Ms. Jean E. Stanfield	Senate/Public Member	03/22/02		Burlington
Rabbi Morton M. Rosenthal	Senate/Public Member	03/22/01		Mercer
Ms. Murshell Johnson Bland	Senate/Public Member	03/22/00		Bergen
Vacancy	Assembly/Public Member	3 year term		
Mr. Stephen D. Landfield	Assembly/Public Member	11/18/01		Morris
Vacancy	Assembly/Public Member	1 year term		

General Assembly Members

Assemblyman Michael Carroll	Assembly Representative	01/11/00		Morris
Assemblyman Charles Zisa	Assembly Representative	01/11/00		Bergen

Senate Members

Senator Wayne Bryant	Senate Representative	01/11/00		Camden
Senator Jack Sinagra	Senate Representative	01/11/00		Middlesex

County Human Relations Commissions Members

Mr. Robert Stone	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	02/19/01		Middlesex
Ms. Alice Hugh Brown	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	09/29/00		Middlesex
Rev. Stephen Giordano	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	09/29/00		Bergen
Ms. Janice Sweeney	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	09/29/99		Monmouth
Mr. James Hogan	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	06/09/02		Gloucester
Dr. William King	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	06/09/02		Gloucester
Ms. Adrienne Miles	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	06/09/02		Camden

Ex Officio Members

Attorney General John J. Farmer, designee Paul H. Zoubek

Commissioner of the Department of Education David C. Hespe, designee Dr. Paul B. Winkler

Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs Jane M. Kenny, designee Ray Montgomery

Acting Commissioner of the Department of Corrections Susan Maurer, designee Mary Cupo-Cruz

Commissioner of the Department of Human Services Michele K. Guhl, designee Wendi Patella

Acting Public Defender Peter A. Garcia, designee Joel M. Harris

Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts Richard J. Williams, J.A.D., designee David P. Anderson, Jr.

Director of the Division of Criminal Justice Kathryn Flicker, designee Robin Parker

Superintendent of the Division of State Police Col. Carson J. Dunbar, Jr.

Director of the Division on Civil Rights O. Lisa Dabreu, designee Jennifer Pitre

President of the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police Thomas Michaud, designee Kevin J. Gaffney

President of the New Jersey Bias Crime Officers Association Thomas E. Culp, Sr.

A County Superintendent of Schools (selected by Commissioner, Dept. of Ed.)

President of the New Jersey County Prosecutors Association Stephen B. Rubin, designee John B. Dangler

President of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association Louis Della Barca

President of the New Jersey Education Association Michael Johnson, designee Edithe A. Fulton

As directed by law, the Council has elected officers from among the public members of the Council. The first slate of officers elected by the Council [in November of 1999](#) were:

Chairperson	Jean E. Stanfield
Vice Chairperson	Morton M. Rosenthal
Secretary	Jacqueline B. Kates
Treasurer	Robert A. Freda

On November 17, 2000 the Council elected a second slate of officers:

Chairperson	Jean E. Stanfield
Vice Chairperson	Stephen D. Landfield
Secretary	Jacqueline B. Kates
Treasurer	Robert A. Freda

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Through its by-laws (A1), the Council has created five (5) Standing Committees to develop strategies and projects, which are submitted to the Council for approval. Members of the Council serve on one or more of the committees. It is through these committees that the

Council accomplishes its tasks to cooperate with state, county and local government agencies to educate, encourage, develop, promote and strengthen respect for human rights and cultural diversity and to prevent and combat racism, intolerance and bigotry in the State of New Jersey. Each committee submits policy proposals and recommendations to undertake initiatives consistent with the various responsibilities of the Council as set forth by law.

The Standing Committees have developed and taken action to accomplish substantial initiatives which will serve to diffuse tensions in communities affected by bias crimes and assist county and municipal human relations commissions in their significant roles at the local level.

Education Committee

The Education Committee reviews existing programs and plans and develops new programs which will educate and sensitize New Jersey citizens to the value of diversity in the community with the goal of eliminating tensions based upon bias and discrimination. Several concrete projects are underway. These are consistent with and reinforce the State's "Many Faces One Family" campaign.

In March 2000, the Council cosponsored with the Commission on Higher Education and the National Conference for Community and Justice a statewide conference held at Jersey City State University on the topic of "Diversity in Higher Education."

The Council cosponsored, together with the New Jersey Prosecutors Association, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the Martin Luther King Commemorative Commission and the Princeton Theological Seminary, an anti-violence teleconference, on February 9, 2001. The conference was a public service program of the New Jersey region of the National Conference for Community and Justice. The conference explored the "best practices" for "Understanding and Preventing Anti-Social Behavior in Today's Youth."

In conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Education, the Council is cosponsoring a revised and updated edition of the PRIDE Compendium to be completed in 2001. This is a publication detailing the best and most promising practices in New Jersey schools dealing with prejudice and bias reduction, human relations, diversity and equity in the schools.

The Education Committee is also working with the Division of Licensing of the Department of Education and with the higher education community to accomplish several enhancements to teacher training. The first is a recommended revision to the teacher certification process to encourage diversity education requirements for teacher candidates and in-service training for certificated teachers. Additionally, the Council has encouraged changes to the regulations of the Department of Education in order to include sexual orientation and disability as protected classes in the regulations pertaining to Equality in Education Programs. (N.J.A.C. 6:4-1).

The Education Committee is also exploring ways to encourage workplace diversity training in the public, private and nonprofit sectors and to offer resources to employers to accomplish diversity training. Additionally, at the request of the Education Committee, the Council urged the Department of Education to increase funding for the Department's Office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues. (A21).

Community Outreach Committee

The paramount focus of the Community Outreach Committee has been to increase the diversity of representation on the Council itself. In this way, the Council will maintain its credibility as it works with community based organizations to prevent bias crime and reduce prejudice. At the recommendation of the Community Outreach Committee, the Council approved on September 28, 2000 a resolution establishing an Advisory Board to the Council.

The Advisory Board is comprised of individuals who may be affiliated with a community based group but who will participate on the Advisory Board in their individual capacities so that they are at liberty to offer their personal views, rather than that of an organization, on issues which come before the Council. Representatives of various religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and the disabled, as well as police officers, teachers, students, and women were invited to serve on the Advisory Board. A dinner welcoming the new Advisory Board was held on November 2, 2000.

The members of the Advisory Board are: David T. Abalos, Valorie Y. Caffee, John C. Campbell, Antonio Cardona, Kwang H. Cha, Jeff Clark, Samuel L. Clark, Phyllis Paul Davis, Darlene de la Cruz, Ramón de la Cruz, Sandra L. Ewell, Charles "Shai" Goldstein, J. Hugh Gratz, Eric F. Johnson, Pradip (Peter) Kothari, Mohamed Lateef, M.D., Nancy Mamis-King, Terri McNichol, Caroline L. Meuly, Franco Minervini, Yumiko Mishima, Jim Peeler, Julius D. Ramsey, Dr. Joan Rivitz, Javier Robles, Felicia Smith, and Linda B. Van Fossen.

The Community Outreach Committee is also developing a Best Practices Awards program which will recognize successful efforts to promote diversity and cultural and racial understanding in business, education, law enforcement and the general community. In conjunction with the Human Relations Commissions Liaison Committee of the Council, the Community Outreach Committee is developing ways to connect positively with county and municipal human relations commissions.

Both committees will also develop plans to implement Regional Community Outreach meetings, which will afford an opportunity for the Council to interact with individuals and community based organizations throughout the state. Meetings will be held in venues in northern, central, and southern New Jersey in order to encourage and facilitate participation.

Law Enforcement and Community Relations Committee

This Committee has embarked on two ambitious projects focused on the importance of expanding the education of police officers in the area of racial and ethnic diversity as well as

sensitivity training. The Committee is working to develop 15 minute videos and coordinating instructional materials which will be used in the training of police officers and other law enforcement groups in police academy classes. Further, the Law Enforcement and Community Relations Committee is reviewing current Police Training Commission Requirements in the area of diversity training for the purpose of reaching findings and making recommendations to expand and improve this aspect of law enforcement certification.

Policy and Reports Committee

The Policy and Reports Committee compiles reports and works with other committees of the Council to prepare policy statements that represent the consensus of the Council. In large part, the Policy and Reports Committee is the vehicle through which the Council communicates with the public and agencies at all levels of government.

With the technical assistance of the Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations in the Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Law and Public Safety, this Committee has developed a web site (www.njhrc.org) which details the mission and history of the Council, its members and meeting dates, and provides a quick method of communicating with the Council through e-mail. Additionally, this site introduces the web visitor to New Jersey county and municipal human relations commissions and connects the visitor to other useful, related web sites.

The Policy and Reports Committee has the responsibility to prepare official reports of the Council, such as this Interim Report and the biennial report to the Governor and Legislature. The Committee has also developed a brochure to inform the public about the work of the Council. (A15).

Human Relations Commissions Liaison Committee

This Committee works directly with county and municipal human relations commissions through Council volunteers who mentor and assist human relations commissions in their formation and operation. As part of this endeavor, the Committee developed Recommended Minimum and Optimum Standards for county and municipal commissions. (A11).

The standards were adopted by the Council on May 24, 2000. The standards recommend that, at a minimum, county and municipal commissions establish a mission statement, publicize the existence and goals of the commission, be accessible to the public by telephone and mail, meet regularly and provide minutes of meetings upon request, adopt by-laws or a charter, establish procedures to respond to acts of prejudice and to support victims of prejudice and maintain liaisons with local and county law enforcement and education agencies. The standards are guidelines and are not mandatory; but the standards point the way for uniformity and operational success for county and municipal commissions.

As noted above, the Human Relations Commissions Liaison Committee joined efforts with the Community Outreach Committee to recommend formation of an Advisory Board, which was approved by the Council. The newly seated Advisory Board will increase the

diversity of opinions, ideas and perspectives available to the Council in the development and execution of its various human relations duties. Members of the Advisory Board may attend Council and committee meetings, quarterly Advisory Board meetings and generally offer their views and suggestions on all aspects of the Council's agenda.

The Human Relations Commissions Liaison Committee has also conducted a needs assessment review of county and municipal commissions. With substantial support from the Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations, interviews have been conducted with representatives of each county and municipal commission. The Recommended Minimum and Optimum Standards guidelines adopted by the Council were used by the Committee as the baseline for the assessment of commissions. This Committee will recommend certain improvements to the local commissions as needed to strengthen the effectiveness of the commissions. Beyond this, the Human Relations Commissions Liaison Committee will assist those counties and municipalities, which either have not formed a commission or have a commission that is not operational.

Special Committees

In addition to the five Standing Committees, the Council has also formed two Special Committees. **The Housing Committee** will examine issues with regard to housing discrimination as well as fair and affordable housing. **The Special Legislative Committee** examines and proposes legislative initiatives of concern to the Council.

The Council has approved recommendations made by the Special Legislative Committee to support legislation which will designate the Secretary of State as an ex officio member of the Council. The amendment will further allow Council members who are representatives of human relations commissions to be elected as the chairperson or vice chairperson of the Council, and to allow all other members of the executive committee to hold other Council officer positions. The amendment will also allow the executive committee as a whole to adopt the Council by-laws. S-1948 was introduced by Senators Wayne R. Bryant and Jack Sinagra on December 14, 2000. (A17).

In addition, the Council plans to review proposed hate crime legislation when it becomes available from the Office of the Attorney General or from other sources.