

**NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL**

**May 2003 Report**

**Presented To**

**GOVERNOR JAMES E. MCGREEVEY**

**And The**

**NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE**

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## INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Human Relations Council (Council) has been in continuous operation since its creation by the New Jersey Legislature in 1997. The Council was formed 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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 bi-monthly meetings of the Council are convened in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

In 2001, the Council assembled an Advisory Board to expand the participation of the community. Members of the Advisory may be affiliated with a community based special interest group, but the members serve in their individual capacity and do not vote on official Council action. However, the Advisory Board has added to the dialogue of the Council and offered suggestions for action by the Council. The Advisory Board includes men and women of various professions, religions, ethnicities and sexual orientation, as well as the disabled. This added diversity has broadened the scope of the Council’s agenda and ensures an all inclusive approach to Council business. In 2002, the Advisory Board submitted to the Council its own Annual report of recommendations for consideration by the Council.

The statute forming the Council directs a biennial report to the Governor and Legislature.<sup>2</sup> In 2000, the Council determined that an Interim Report was warranted to advise the Governor and the Legislature of the action taken by the Council in its first year of operation and to outline its future plans on behalf of the citizens of the State of New Jersey.

ACCORDINGLY, on this 7th day of May in the year, 2003, this Biennial Report is presented to Governor James E. McGreevey and the New Jersey Legislature by the New Jersey Human Relations Council.

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<sup>1</sup> N.J.S.A. 52:9DD-8.

<sup>2</sup> 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. In addition, 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 have permanent seats on the Council, as designated by law.

### **Executive Committee Members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Appointment</b>	<b>Term Exp.</b>	<b>County</b>
Vacancy	Governor/Public Member	2 year term	
Rev. Collin Days, Sr.	Governor/Public Member	09/29/01	Atlantic
Vacancy	Governor/Public Member	3 year term	
Mr. Lucious Harvey	Governor/Public Member	09/29/01	Camden
Ms. Sherie Y. Jenkins	Senate/Public Member	03/22/05	Gloucester
Rabbi Morton Rosenthal	Senate/Public Member	03/22/01	Mercer
Ms. Murshell Johnson Bland	Senate/Public Member	03/22/00	Bergen
Mr. Stephen D. Landfield	Assembly/Public Member	11/18/01	Morris
Ms. Jacqueline Kates	Assembly/Public Member	11/18/04	Bergen
Mr. Michael Mordaga	Assembly/Public Member	01/07/05	Bergen

### **General Assembly Members**

Asm. Michael P. Carroll (R)	Assembly Representative	01/11/00	Morris
Asw. Linda Stender (D)	Assembly Representative	01/13/04	Union

### **Senate Members**

Senator Wayne Bryant (D)	Senate Representative	01/11/00	Camden
Senator Diane B. Allen (R)	Senate Representative	01/13/04	Burlington

### **County Human Relations Commission 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
Mr. Jim Peeler	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	03/24/04	Camden
Ms. Janice Sweeney Monmouth	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	09/29/99	
Vacancy	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.		
Vacancy	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.		
Ms. Adrienne Miles	Gov./County Hum. Rel. Rep.	06/09/02	Camden

### **Ex officio Members**

Acting Attorney General Peter C. Harvey, designee Alfred E. Ramey, Jr.  
Commissioner of the Department of Education Dr. William L. Librera, designee Dr. Paul Winkler

Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs Susan Bass Levin, designee Jong Sook Divino  
Commissioner of the Department of Corrections Devon Brown, designee Mary Cupo-Cruz  
Commissioner of the Department of Human Services Gwendolyn L. Harris, designee Margaret E. Sabin  
Public Defender Yvonne Smith Segars, designee Fred W. Hogan  
Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts Richard J. Williams, J.A.D., designee Theodore Fetter  
Acting Director of the Division of Criminal Justice Vaughn McKoy, designee Hester Agudosi  
Acting Superintendent of the Division of State Police Joseph R. Fuentes  
Director of the Division on Civil Rights J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo, designee Philip Freeman  
President of the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police Vernon Henderson, designee Kevin 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 Dolores M. Blackburn  
President of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association Joseph Pizza  
President of the New Jersey Education Association Edithe A. Fulton, designee Arthur Lehrhaupt

The Council has elected officers for one year terms each year since 1999. The current officers are:

Chairperson	Jacqueline Kates
Vice-Chairperson	Stephen Landfield
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Vacant

The Council acknowledges the significant contribution of Jean Stanfield Esq., Burlington County Sheriff, who served as Council Chairperson for two terms, and Rabbi Morton M. Rosenthal, former member of the Anti-Defamation League, who served as Vice-Chairperson for one term.

### **COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

Through its By-laws, the Council has created five (5) Standing Committees (Community Outreach, Education Human Relations Commissions Liaison, Law Enforcement and Community Relations, Policy and Reports). 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 the Council for initiatives consistent with the responsibilities of the Council, as designated by law.

### **STANDING COMMITTEES:**

## **1. Community Outreach Committee**

One of the first initiatives of the Community Outreach Committee was an effort to increase diversity of representation on the Council itself. Together with the Human Relations Liaison Committee a recommendation was made and the Council approved the formation of an Advisory Board. The composition of the Advisory Board has enriched the Council, which received the benefits of the diversity of the Advisory Board's membership in such areas as religion, sexual orientation and ethnicity, as well as through the perspective of the members as parent, student, teacher, police officer or community activist.

The Community Outreach Committee recently has focused its efforts on organizing regional outreach meetings as a means of providing interaction between the Council and community based organizations and members of communities statewide. The Southern Regional Roundtable, cosponsored with the Burlington County Human Relations Commission, was held in August 2001. The Bergen County Human Relations Commission joined with the Council in cosponsoring the Northern Regional Roundtable in November 2001. The Central Regional Roundtable was coordinated with the Middlesex County Human Relations Commission and convened in March 2002.

Approximately 150 people attended the roundtable discussions. These sessions allowed the Council to introduce itself to the community and for the Council to hear issues that concern the community and which fall within the jurisdiction of the Council. A recurrent concern stated at the roundtables was the topic of aggression and bullying in the schools. The Council was alerted to this important issue through its Education and Legislation Committees. The Council participated in the hearings held by the Legislature on pending bills to address this issue. Recently, a statute was enacted requiring boards of education to establish policies that prohibit and punish "harassment, intimidation or bullying." The Council is proud of its participation in the process leading to this significant legislation.

Other concerns raised at the roundtables included recognition of training needed for county and municipal human relations commissions, the rise in bias crime committed by juveniles, monitoring all law enforcement agencies to eliminate racial profiling, training for law enforcement and school staff to eliminate differential treatment of the disabled and those with differing sexual orientation, examination of disparity in health services based on race and ethnicity, and increasing affordable housing to encourage economic diversity in communities. These issues have been redirected to appropriate committees of the Council for further review and recommendation.

## **2. Education Committee**

The Education Committee has undertaken a number of projects and made a series of recommendations to the Council for action in order to enhance diversity and eliminate tensions based upon bias and discrimination. These initiatives have ranged from

conference to recommendations presented to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.

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."

In February 2001, the Council cosponsored with the New Jersey Prosecutors Association, 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 conference that explored the best practices for "Understanding and Preventing Anti-Social Behavior in Today's Youth." Five hundred video cassettes were distributed featuring a keynote address by Dr. David Elkind together with comments by a panel of experts that included parents and youth leaders, as well as representatives from community and religious organizations, and education,

Through the groundwork of the Education Committee, the Council has recommended to the Department of Education a revision to the teacher certification process to encourage diversity education requirement for teacher candidates and in-service training for teachers now in the classrooms of New Jersey. In addition, the Council has encouraged changes to Department of Education regulations 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 Council has also recommended to the Department of Education the allocation of additional funding for the Office of Bilingual and Equity Education. This recommendation was made in order to fulfill the responsibility of the Department of Education to monitor school district compliance regarding mandated elements of Multi Year Equity Plans and to provide leadership in developing training models for teachers in the areas of prejudice reduction and diversity awareness. The Commissioner of Education appointed a representative from the Council's Education Committee to participate on the Statewide Advisory Committee on Educational Equity in order to address issues relating to diversity in education. The Statewide Advisory Committee submitted a final report to the Commissioner of Education. The report reflects the input of the Council.

Consistent with the Council's interest in legislation and other administrative action to address harassment, intimidation and bullying in the schools, the Council also recommended to the Commissioner of Education maintenance of the current level of funding for Character Education. Character education curriculum is an integral part of efforts to address the pressing problem of bullying and other abuses experienced by many school age children.

The Education Committee also has been directed by the Council to formulate a proposal that will provide financial assistance to county and local Human Relations Commissions for programs cosponsored with the Council. The proposal will extend financial

and technical support from the Council to encourage county and local commissions to develop community events, activities and programs aimed at prejudice reduction education.

### **3. 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 recommended and the Council adopted Recommended Minimum and Optimum Standards for county and municipal commissions.

The Recommended Minimum and Optimum Standards recommend that 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 bylaws 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. However, the standards point the way for uniformity and operational success for county and municipal commissions.

Using the Recommended Minimum and Optimum Standards, the Human Relations Liaison Committee, with substantial support from the Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations, conducted interviews with representatives of each county and municipal commission in order to recommend improvements in the operations of the commissions and to strengthen the effectiveness of the commissions. Results of the survey have been made available to the county and municipal commissions. Those commissions that seek to approve their programs based upon the guidelines may apply to the Council for a grant of up to \$1,000 through the program established by the Council: Financial Assistance Program for County and Municipal Commissions. Thus far, four commissions have applied and been approved for grant money.

In addition, the Human Relations Liaison Committee is working with the Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations in an effort to secure the assistance of county prosecutors in the formation of new county and municipal commissions and to improve the operation of existing commissions. This Committee also worked with the Community Outreach Committee of the Council to recommend of the Advisory Board, which the Council approved.

### **4. Law Enforcement and Community Relations Committee**

The Law Enforcement Committee is working very expeditiously to have the first of fifteen 8 to 15 minute roll-call videos ready by December 2003. The first video will focus on

Middle Eastern cultures. We have a very enthusiastic and diverse committee assembled to help develop this project. We also have the support of federal, state and local law enforcement in this project.

A review of the Police Training Commission (PTC) in the area of diversity training reveals a great degree of variation in approaches from academy to academy. One academy may have a two day training program and another one a four hour program, and both are in compliance. Some of this training is provided by an outside agency and this also varies from agency to agency. We concluded that something has to be done but it will be difficult to legislate exactly how much time is spent in these areas. We will revisit this issue at some future date.

## **5. 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](http://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 the Interim Report and this 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).

## **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### **1. Housing Committee**

The Housing Committee will continue to examine issues with regard to housing discrimination as well as fair and affordable housing.

### **2. Special Legislative Committee**

The Special Legislative Committee has recommended, and the Council approved, an initiative to amend the statute that creates the Council by expanding the provisions

affecting governance of the Council. The initiative is pending in the Legislature through S-423 and A-2491. The initiative would broaden the eligibility of Council members to serve as an officer of the Council. Presently, only public members are eligible to serve as Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. Enactment of this initiative would make eligible for election as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson those persons named to the Council as representatives of county human relations commissions. The initiative would make any member eligible to serve as Treasurer and Secretary of the Council. A further feature of the initiative is the addition of the Secretary of State as an ex-officio member of the Council.

In another legislative initiative, this Committee monitored legislation to replace the previous law on enhanced penalties for bias crimes in order to meet constitutional standards. The prior law permitted judges to enhance sentences when bias was involved in a crime. The new bias intimidation law enacted in January 2002 designates the enhanced sentencing function to the jury.

### **3. Bullying Prevention Working Group**

The Bullying Prevention Working Group was formed in April, 2002. A total of 14 Council and Advisory Board members joined this special committee. Previously held Community Roundtable events throughout the state had shown the issue of bullying to be a prime concern within many communities. Added to that was the pending anti-bullying legislation. The Working Group met monthly to formulate plans to support the pending legislation and to consider other projects.

In May and June, 2002, Council Members Janice Sweeney and Council Vice-Chair Steven Landfield testified before the Senate and Assembly Education Committee hearings in support of the anti-bullying legislation. This legislation was subsequently passed by both houses and Governor McGreevey signed it into law on September 6, 2002.

At the September, 2002 meeting, a proposal was passed that the NJ Human Relations Council would co-sponsor with the Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations a statewide campaign to be called New Jersey Cares About Bullying. The launch event for New Jersey Cares About Bullying would be a conference, planned for March 17, 2003. At the January, 2003 meeting, the NJ Human Relations Council voted to provide funding support for the conference.

The New Jersey Cares About Bullying Conference Planning Committee enlisted the support of several Council and Advisory Board members: Philip Freeman, Assistant Director of the Division on Civil Rights; Dr. Joan Rivitz, Chair of the Advisory Board; Reginald Johnson and Yumiko Mishima, both Advisory Board members. Their participation was invaluable at all stages of the conference preparation and on the day of the conference.

The New Jersey Cares About Bullying Conference was a clear success. While the original plan was for a conference of no more than 500 people at Rutgers University Busch Campus Center, response to the conference invitation was so overwhelming that the capacity was expanded from 500 to 700 attendees. Even with that expansion, over 1100 requests to attend were received plus many more requests to be put on a mailing list. Of those who attended, approximately a third were educators, a third law enforcement, and a third from various community organizations.

Conference sponsors included:

New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations  
The New Jersey Human Relations Council  
The National Conference for Community and Justice

Co-sponsors included:

New Jersey Department of Education  
New Jersey Department of State  
New Jersey Division on Civil Rights  
Rutgers University Police Department  
D.A.R.E. NJ, Inc.  
Middlesex County Division of Children's Services  
Middlesex County Vicinage, Minority Concerns Committee  
New Jersey Association of School Psychologists  
New Jersey Child Assault Prevention Project  
Anti-Defamation League, New Jersey Region  
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
Rutgers Police Department  
NJ Council of Chartered Members of the National Black Police Association

The keynote speaker at the conference was Erika Harold, Miss America 2003, whose platform focuses on prevention of bullying and harassment among youth. Her speech was inspiring and clearly motivated conference participants to work seriously on this problem in their communities. Other speakers included representatives of the various sponsoring groups, most notably Acting Attorney General Peter Harvey. The emcee for the plenary sessions was Ms. Della Crews, News 12 New Jersey Anchorwoman.

Workshops were designed to meet the needs of educators, law enforcement and the general public. Twenty-four workshops were scheduled and rooms were quite full for all sessions. Evaluations were generally quite positive. In particular the two sessions with youth panels received unanimous approval from attendees. Professional development credit was given to those educators and law enforcement personnel who requested it.

The Bullying Prevention Working Group will meet again following the May meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council to discuss its next steps.

### **ADVISORY BOARD**

The Council created the Advisory Board in 2001. The composition of the Advisory Board has increased the diversity of opinions, ideas and perspectives available to the Council in the development and execution of its many human relations duties. Member of the Advisory Board may attend Council and Committee meetings and participate in all respects except voting. The Advisory Board holds its own meetings and generally offers their views and suggestions on all aspects of the Council's agenda.

Current members of the Advisory Board include:

D.C. Agrawal

Valorie Y. Caffee

John C. Campbell

Jeff Clark

Phyllis Paul Davis

Ramón de la Cruz

Jane Dunhamn

Sandra L. Ewell

Charles "Shai" Goldstein

J. Hugh Gratz

Eric F. Johnson

Reginald Johnson

Pradip (Peter) Kothari

Mohamed Lateef, M.D.

Terri McNichol

Caroline L. Meuly

Franco Minervini

Shelley Jacobs Mintz

Yumiko Mishima (Secretary)

Julius D. Ramsey

Dr. Joan Rivitz (Chairperson)

Diane Schwartz

Felicia Smith

Linda B. Van Fossen

In 2002, the Advisory Board issued to the Council its own Annual Report of Recommendations. The Report suggested that the Council (1) Develop an attendance policy reflecting commitment of Council members to the goals of the Council; (2) Develop annual written goals for the Council; (3) Convene a diversity awareness retreat for Council Executive Committee members and ensure that the Council complies with minimum training standards; and (4) Adoption by the Council of guidelines to allow the Council Chairperson to act on behalf of the Council in emergent circumstances. The Report has been accepted by the Council for review and appropriate action.