

MASW Human Rights Task Force
Meeting Agenda: February 25, 2010
606 East Capitol, Jefferson City

1. Sparkplug Foundation Grant:

- a. Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates (**MIRA**) \$500 allocated. Christine is working on a Columbia service provider event with Centro Latino.
- b. Lenny Ziskind and/or Larry Brown (both of whom have indicated an interest) on **hate groups**, with human trafficking included as an example of barriers to an accepting society. Larry will be speaking in JC February 27, at an interfaith gathering. Don will urge KC Chapter to set something up with Lenny, since that's where he lives.
- c. Enforcing **hate crimes laws** with input from local police, Department of Justice, MHRC and representatives of target groups. Stephanie and Don have made initial contacts for a JC event.
- d. Kevin Willmott's **The Only Good Indian** (<http://www.theonlygoodindian.com/>), documentary about 19th Century Kansas with a bounty hunter after a Native American. Nancy and Rod Chapel, Jeff City NAACP president, have arranged a 4 pm, 3/4, showing at Lincoln U Langston Hughes Theater. Nancy will write a statement for grant documentation. We'll set up an MASW table, and collect evaluation forms. \$200 allocated from grant. A small dinner with Willmott is planned; anyone interested?
- e. **Racial Profiling**. Don met with Columbia police chief Burton; we are in agreement about the problem and a strategy for improvement. Don will round up experts to lay out the elements of a diversity training program that can help officers with unconscious bias. Burton will work on implementation, including improvements in a wide variety of law enforcement strategies to improve relationships with minority communities. We will build a coalition of groups to support the effort and educate the public. Stephanie and Don spoke with Columbia Human Rights Commission staff; they want to cooperate with us on this and other projects.

Kathleen Clark, Wash U Law School, recommended Good Cop: the case for preventive policing by **David Harris** as good background on the problems associated with profiling. It gives the big picture of how better relationships between police departments and communities prevent crime and protect citizen rights. She thinks he would be interested in coming to Missouri. Would we be interested in using grant money to have Harris speak in St Louis, KC and Columbia?
- f. **Job Discrimination Forum** aimed at employee rights. MCHR, Columbia HRC (Marie and Steve Hollis), ACLU (Dan) have expressed an interest in this. This keeps being bumped back because of other things, but Columbia HRC continues to be interested.
- G. **Human Trafficking**: Nanette Ward is thinking about possible programs.
- H. **English Only**: it is important that everyone learn English, but policies that punish people who don't are unnecessary and often harmful. Stephanie and a fellow student interning at Centro Latino are working on an event.

2. Updates:

- a. **Springfield Human Rights Commission** update

b. **Tasers:** The Taser-free group is building support in Columbia for a ban, with backing from MASW Central chapter. Joan Bray has offered SB590 which creates a task force. Webber and Roorda have offered HCR 30 which creates a legislative committee to study “less lethal” (or “less than lethal”) weapons used by law enforcement.

c. **Bullying/suicide prevention:** This fits nicely with the effort around profiling and diversity training, so that will be a good opportunity to work on it.

d. **Centralia nondiscrimination** ordinance was defeated by a 5-2 vote. We would support work on a Boone County ordinance, but the county may not have this power. Promo and Columbia activists are contemplating an effort to add transgender to the Columbia non-discrimination ordinance; We support them.

3. DeAnna Alonso has a resource center in Jeff City for **foster care** kids and families. Her priorities are better services for kids who are aging out and better distribution of resources statewide; St Louis and Kansas City take everything. She is also concerned that Department of Corrections doesn't gather data on foster kids who end up in prison; if they kept better records, better foster care services would be justified.

4. Other Events

a. **Universal Design.** Columbia HRC will cooperate on a program in April to present information about UD to as many individuals and representatives of groups as we can round up. Leslie Anderson of Columbia Services for Independent Living will provide expertise and connections. We will try to bring Colleen Starkloff in as the presenter.

4. **Legislation:** Don will communicate support to bill sponsors. Please share information on bills important to you.

a. **Universal Design.** Rachel Storch has presented HB1737, calling for UD in government funded affordable housing: **HRTF supports it.** We would help with an event for legislators at the capitol. The bill gives an explicit list of features to be included in a new or rehabilitated affordable housing unit.

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills101/biltxt/intro/HB17371.htm>

b. **Medical Marijuana:** HB1670 filed with 16 supporters including Republican Schaaf from St Joe. It would allow a referendum. **HRTF supports it.**

c. **ACLU bills:**

1. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (**TANF**) SB 607, 615, 725, 821 all call for drug screening for TANF recipients based on reasonable suspicion. Reasonable cause doesn't meet the constitutional standard of probable cause, and there are better ways of dealing with drug abuse. **HRTF opposes.**

2. HB1257(Smith) allows charges against women whose **use of drugs results in harm to fetus/baby.** The bill would encourage abortions. Pro-life and civil liberties groups oppose.

3. HB1478 (Hughes) Authorizes the **expungement of criminal records** including convictions for any nonviolent crime, misdemeanor, or nonviolent drug violation. Current law leaves the conviction on a person's record even if the person has received clemency. Online data bases make the issue moot. **HRTF supports.**

d. **Food Stamps:** Yvonne Wilson has two bills that would allow restoration of food stamp eligibility to people convicted of drug violations, and their families. SB612 and SB613. **HRTF supports**

f. **MIRA:**

1. HB1231 (Davis) requires **drivers test to be in English. HRTF opposes.**
2. SB783(Justus) Dream Act: MO HS grads get **in-state tuition** regardless of immigration status. **HRTF supports.**
3. HJR64 would require government **ids for voting**, which puts an unnecessary burden on elderly and low-income voters Mira oppose; **HRTF opposes.**
- g. There are a number of **death penalty** bills. HB1683 (Deeken) would suspend executions during a study. SB599 (Bray) repeals the death penalty. HB1413 (McGhee) requires the Attorney General to do a number of things that expose the cost of death penalty prosecutions. HB1415 (McGhee) provides counsel and other help to people seeking clemency. HB1550 (Calloway) prohibits death penalty imposed because of race, and permits use of statistical evidence by defendant. **HRTF supports all.**
- h. The big issue is the **budget and taxes**; the biggest violation of human rights is going to come from cuts to programs low-income families need to have a basic level of health and security. The tenets of human rights demand that Missouri have an equitable tax system, not a sales tax (HJR56) that puts no tax on income the rich don't spend (or don't spend in Missouri).
- i. HB1488(Jones) **amends human rights act** making it harder to prove discrimination; could threaten federal funding to MHRC because Missouri law wouldn't met federal standards. **HRTF opposes.**

5. Lobby days; let's do what we can to support each other's efforts on special HR topics

- a. MASW Student Advocacy Day, Tuesday, March 2
- d. Promo Equality Day, Wednesday, March 24
- e. UD, aging, disabilities, etc.
- f. League of Women Voters
- g. MASW Economic Justice TF on fair taxes
- h. foster care
- i. others

6. Other events:

- a. Universal Design Summit, St Louis, 10/9-12: <http://stlouis.uds4.org/>

7. Next meeting: 1:30, Thursday, March 25, 606 E. Capitol, Jefferson City.

Don Love