

BLOOMINGTON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Director's Quarterly Report

October to December 2023

I. **Discrimination Complaints**

A. Pending from previous quarters

1. Commissioner Gray's Case

- a. Woman filed complaint alleging discrimination in employment on the basis of disability in July, 2023
- b. Women reinstated in her job, case withdrawn October, 2023

B. New cases

1. Commissioner Jackson's Case

- a. Man filed complaint of racial discrimination in employment October, 2023
- b. Awaiting reply to Respondent's position statement or withdrawal by February, 2024

2. Commissioner Coover's Case

- a. Women filed complaint of racial discrimination in housing, November, 2023
- b. Respondent issued position statement
- c. Interviewing witnesses

3. Commissioner Radewan's Case

- a. Women filed complaint of disability discrimination in employment, December, 2023
- b. Awaiting Respondent's position statement by January, 2024

4. Commissioner Bangert's Case

- a. Women filed complaint of disability discrimination in housing, December 2023
- b. Awaiting Respondent's position statement by January, 2024

5. Commissioner William's Case

- a. Man filed complaint of national origin discrimination, December 2024
- b. Interviewed witness January, 2024

C. Complaints filed with other jurisdictions

None

II. **Miscellaneous Inquiries**

- A. Man was banned from Aldi's because he made a female cashier uncomfortable. But they wouldn't say why. Suggested we could file a

case if he lays out his story in linear format for the interactions he had with the manager who banned him.

- B. Employment issue where caller thought discrimination had occurred with an exclusion from a 60-day bonus she thought she should have received. Didn't seem to be any proof that there was discrimination occurring. Encouraged her to talk to Indiana Legal Services, but to fill out an intake form if she wanted us to pursue it further.
- C. Caller thought that it was unfair that when she gave a date for her leaving the company that they were excluding her from a Christmas bonus. Referred to Indiana Legal Services.
- D. Individual thought that a landlord not allowing a fiancée to live in her apartment because he just had a misdemeanor was discrimination. Let her know that this wasn't discrimination against a protected class and referred her to Indiana Legal Services and HAND.
- E. Woman says her brother and sister-in-law are being discriminated against due to him being black and the mother of his child being white. Feels the family court isn't allowing him to speak, despite numerous request to do so. County courts aren't within our jurisdiction due to conflict of interest and referred to Indiana Civil Rights Commission.
- F. Woman saying that an employee at a big box store was offering unsolicited political opinions and that a friend who also went there said that they had refused a cake decoration job because that the message was inappropriate (it was an LGBTQ+ saying).
- G. Voice mail, so didn't get a chance to talk to her, but would say that the unsolicited political opinions aren't discrimination and if her friend wanted to file a complaint we would consider
- H. Caller has a significant other living with her who is not on the lease. Landlord is threatening to evict if he does not leave. Referred her to the Housing & Eviction Prevention Project.
- I. Man complained of a judge who has unfairly sentenced him because of the police misreporting him leaving a scene of an accident. He wrote this letter from Fort Wayne, but no indication of discrimination of a protected class, and suggested he seek resources in Fort Wayne, because it wasn't clear what he wanted changed to know a specific organization to refer him to.
- J. Person had a threatening neighbor. Let them know it was a safety issue and to call Police Department.
- K. A person said they had an ESA, but the email was unclear what kind of discrimination occurred. Tried to clarify and no response.
- L. Several complaints, including mold infestation, inaccessible features, forced to sign documents, and more. Interviewed the complainant and asked for her to provide documentation. She didn't provide any information. Followed up and no response.

- M. A 76-year-old woman was frustrated by what she saw as lack of accessibility of the parking meters when she couldn't put coins in and would be required to use credit card or an app. She felt that this was problematic for people who aren't tech savvy or could afford it. Referred her to the head of Parking Services, Michelle Wahl, who she talked to and explained the system and what to do in the future to avoid the problem.
- N. A wheelchair user believes that too many restaurants are not ADA-compliant. Talked through examples of places that are and aren't accessible and gave him information about an upcoming Council for Community Accessibility meeting at which the Monroe County Building Coordinator would be presenting.
- O. Individual believes that eviction proceedings by the property manager were begun due to racial discrimination. It occurred when he was in the hospital, even though he paid rent right after he got out. He believes the hospital stay was caused by poor treatment of him during a renovation. He was also assessed late fees. Worked with him to find a resolution and the property manager relented and dismissed late fees and then dismissed the eviction charge. He had a refrigerator that was moved without his permission and they ended up returning that.
- P. Person has a landlord that is intimidating them, breaking into their house, and threatening them. They are in Ellettsville. Referred them to Eviction Prevention Project, Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and the Ellettsville Police.
- Q. Individual with a guide dog was walking on Clear Creek trail, verbally accosted by another walker, who was very unhappy that they were not walking on the right side of the trail (guide dogs are trained to hug the far left side). Discussed with Legal, Parks & Rec, and Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator on any issues with this. Gave her information on an individual holding her liable for disobeying park rules to walk on the right and mentioned the Council for Community Accessibility to find support from this kind of discrimination.

III. Publicity

- A. Emailed monthly newsletter, *Rights Stuff*, to 100+ individuals and organizations
- B. Sparks regularly updated BHRC Facebook Page

IV. Networking/Education

- A. Shermis attended Economic Stability Advisory Group meetings for the South Central Community Action Program in November

- B. Shermis attended monthly meetings for the Nonprofit Alliance's Community Outreach Breakfast
- C. Shermis attended a Promoting Racial Justice and Transparency in Indiana focus group
- D. Shermis was presented with a City of Bloomington Innovation Reward for Reuse (Mobility Aids Lending Library program)
- E. Shermis attended a meeting of the Monroe County CHIP-Inequity, Discrimination, Bias Committee
- F. Shermis facilitated a Meet the Funders Nonprofit Alliance networking event
- G. Shermis attended the Board/Commission Appreciation event
- H. Shermis co-chaired the COB United Way campaign
- I. Shermis worked with the Council for Community Accessibility and the Nonprofit Alliance to produce their monthly newsletters
- J. Radewan attended a presentation on Self-Help for Self-Help Centers
- K. Radewan attended a workshop on Fair Housing - Gender
- L. Radewan attended a workshop on Fair Housing - Race, Color, National Origin
- M. Radewan attended the Monroe County Childhood Conditions Summit (MC3)
- N. Presented by Youth Services Bureau of Monroe County & BTCC- Building a Thriving Compassionate Community
- O. Radewan attended a training on Multi-Sector Advocacy: A Look Ahead
- P. Radewan attended a training on Housing unStable: Policy and Advocacy Solutions to Housing Stability
- Q. Radewan attended a training on Nonlawyer Navigators in State Courts: Voices from the Field
- R. Sparks attended a training on caring for those who care: DOL/EEOC/Women's Bureau
- S. Sparks attended a training by the EEOC & Anti-Defamation League: on Antisemitism in the workplace
- T. Sparks attended an EEOC/OFCCP training on Overviews for Employers and Federal Contractors

V. ADA and Accessibility Issues

- A. Shermis facilitated the Disabilities Service Providers' Coalition meeting
- B. Shermis staffed meetings of the Council for Community Accessibility (CCA)
- C. Shermis staffed meetings of the CCA Accessibility Committee
- D. Shermis staffed meetings of the CCA Transportation and Mobility Committee
- E. Shermis attended a quarterly meeting of the ADA Indiana Steering Committee
- F. Shermis attended bi-monthly meetings of the Digital Accessibility Working Group

- G. Shermis attended a Promoting Racial Justice and Transparency in Indiana focus group
- H. Shermis attended a training on How National Week Without Driving Is Shifting the Transportation Paradigm
- I. Shermis worked with COB Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator on prioritizing downtown curb ramps for upgrades
- J. Shermis attended a training on Promoting Racial Justice and Transparency in Indiana focus group
- K. Shermis attended a training on Promoting Autonomy for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities through Decisional and Other Supports
- L. Shermis attended a training on Accessible Word Documents
- M. Shermis attended a training on Returning to the Office – Accessible Hybrid meetings
- N. Shermis attended a training on Persons with Disabilities, Technology, and the Evolving Legal Landscape
- O. Shermis attended a training on ADA Compliance 101 for Parks & Rec
- P. Shermis attended a training on Artificial Intelligence and the ADA: Understanding How Employment Discrimination May Occur . . . And How to Avoid It
- Q. Shermis, with members of Indiana Association for the Deaf, Council for Community Accessibility, the Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission, and the City Council, helped pass an ordinance on closed captioning