



# STATE OF IOWA

TERRY BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
BETH TOWNSEND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Minutes of the February 10, 2011 Meeting of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission

- I. Roll Call:** Claypool, Eychaner, Gitchell, Morain (by phone), Chapman  
**Staff:** Townsend, Schrader  
**Public** (all members of the NAACP): Beverly Couch, Darlene Greenfield, Shane Shook (by phone), Arnold Woods (by phone)
- II. Minutes from December meeting:** approved by unanimous consent.
- III. Executive Director Townsend's Report**
- Veterans bill submitted by Rep. Hanusa: copies distributed of the draft bill; discussion on how this bill would interact with federal legislation (USERA); what kind of discriminatory acts "veterans" are facing and whether amending the ICRA is the appropriate fix; whether a state version of USERA might be a better option although it protects those reservists and guard members with active duty commitment. The Commission needs more information before making any decisions regarding support for the bill.
- IV. Legislative Issues**
- House Study Bill 50 (HSB50): While it died in subcommittee yesterday, it may come back up in another form as Rep Anderson has indicated he may try again. House leadership opposed the bill. Commissioner Claypool testified at the sub-committee hearing on February 9, 2011 against the bill. Director Townsend also issued a public statement expressing concern about the effect of the proposed language upon the ICRA. Commissioners are looking at writing an op-ed piece to address sections of the bill.
  - Subpoena bill: no numbers have been assigned by either the Senate or the House; Director Townsend will send a copy of the text to the Governor's Office for review.
  - Administrative Rules Change in regard to some of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) duties: Director Townsend will send a copy of the text to the Governor's Office for review as well as getting it reinstated.
  - Budget for the Commission: Projected budget for upcoming fiscal year is \$1,297,000, which is a \$138,000 reduction from FY2011. Hopefully this will not result in loss to staffing. Director Townsend testified before the Appropriations Committee. Schrader oversees the agency's grants. ICRC received a grant from IDED, will continue to have VISTA members through the end of November, and is waiting to find out if it received a FHIP grant or a technology grant. The Commission is looking at all alternatives to working within current budget constraints including using more interns to help with screening and investigations.
  - SSB1108: This is a bill amending the ICRA to exclude prisoners from protection under the act. The act was prompted by the recent Iowa Supreme Court decision in *Renda v. ICRC*. The ICRC has concerns that the language in the bill is too broad and may not provide protection for prisoners employed by private employers.

## V. Commissioner Reports

- Chapman: I'll Make Me a World in Iowa; Appreciation Staff Lunch (would like to propose it is done at least once a year); expressed concerned about possible elimination of AmeriCorps; February 22<sup>nd</sup> is the MLK Scholarship Banquet at the Ankeny Campus of DMACC
- AmeriCorps sign-on letter: Motion made by Eychaner and Second by Gitchell to have the Commission join the sign-on letter to support funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps. Unanimously approved.
- Eychaner: attended memorial for Cryss Farley who was the former chair of ACLU Iowa; shared information about the new Transgender Equality report; distributed brochures for the Iowa Matthew Shepard Scholarship Program; will be inducted into the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame on February 22, 2011 in the Capitol Rotunda at 1:30pm; shared article about the murder of a transgender activist in Uganda
- Gitchell: attended the HSB50 subcommittee meeting; continues her VISTA supervisory duties and shared United Ames' annual report
- Morain: shared that the former chair of the Iowa Newspaper Association was tapped by Governor Branstad to lead state government's efforts on transparency
- Claypool: attended the Fair Housing training call in January sponsored by the Commission; served as a panelist on a webinar with IIEC (mentioned concern about threats to 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment which deals with birthright citizenship and how this could become a slippery slope if then look at other 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights like due process); spoke at the HSB50 subcommittee meeting; events coming up include the Governor's Conference on LGBT Youth on February 24<sup>th</sup> (Director Townsend will speak at the luncheon), Des Moines Human Rights Commission's Annual Symposium on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and League events on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

## VI. Public Comments

- Beverly Couch: local NAACP President would like to meet with ICRC. Ms. Couch will coordinate with commissioners to set up a date and time.
- Arnold Woods, NAACP President: NAACP Youth Banquet is February 19<sup>th</sup> at the Hy-Vee Center on E. Euclid and is \$35/per person. On Saturday, February 12, 2011, there will be a workshop for high school and college students about Social Security. The workshop will be held at Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Des Moines.

## VII. Adjournment

