

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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MAYOR

MINUTES

JANUARY 10, 2008

**Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Room 3B
Van Nuys, CA 91401**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Katie Buckland, Vice President
Rocio Córdoba
Susan Berke Fogel
Helen Han
Liliana Pérez
Francille Rusan Wilson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Dominique DiPrima

STAFF

Kellie Hawkins
Veronica Hendrix
Anne Dunn
Shannon Nemzer
Hannah Farley

GUESTS

Amy Tien
Serena Josef
Eve Sheedy
Eduardo Soriano-Hewitt
Sandy Banks
Holly Mitchell
Ryan Mitchell
Mary Stamps
Bena Larkey
Julia Gabor
Julie Maers
Lisa Blum
Kay Dendy

Shirley Aldana-Schwarz, Commission Intern, transcribed the Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Buckland called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2007

The minutes of December 7, 2007 were unanimously approved, as revised.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The election of Commissioner Fogel as President was unanimously approved.

President Fogel thanked the Commissioners and stated that it is a real privilege to be in a position to work to serve women and girls in the City of Los Angeles. She welcomed those who attended the meeting and invited them to address the Commission.

President Fogel welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Francille Rusan Wilson. Commissioner Wilson stated that she is excited to be on the Commission. She stated that she is a labor and intellectual historian at USC. Her research is on women and work and she is looking forward to working with the Commission and learning a lot.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

A. Holly Mitchell, Chair, State of California Commission on the Status of Women. Her 4-year term as commissioner has ended. She served as chair for the last two years. She encouraged Commissioners to visit the State Commission's website regularly as there will be upcoming hearings. She stated that for the first time in the forty-year history of the State Commission public hearings were also held outside of Sacramento in the communities of Los Angeles, and Fresno.

Ms. Mitchell discussed the public policy document that came about as a result of those hearings. It reflects the legislative agenda of the State Commission. It created a platform on specific issues that would guide the work of the staff and the Commission's work around specific bills. She stated that she hopes the Los Angeles City Commission will consider some of the proposals that have been put forward in the State Commission's policy document and support some of the legislation the State Commission has sponsored. The State Commission will be hosting public hearings again at the end of this calendar year. Los Angeles will probably be one of the municipalities for the State Commission meetings and hopes the Los Angeles City Commission will cosponsor or partner with the State Commission.

President Fogel stated that this Commission instituted a Legislative Policy Committee chaired by Commissioner Córdoba. Commissioner Córdoba thanked Ms. Mitchell for sharing with us the work of the State Commission. Commissioner Córdoba stated that this Commission's Legislative Committee looks forward to being able to develop a policy agenda that reflects the priorities of the women and girls in the City of Los Angeles and instituting a process whereby that can be done more systematically. The committee also wants to take a look at the Commission's current Legislative Policy to make sure it is reflective of what the women and girls of Los Angeles have as priorities. In developing some of the goals, one of the goals identified by the Legislative Committee is maintaining very consistent communication and interaction with the State Commission to be able to support some of the priorities that the State Commission has identified.

Ms. Mitchell encouraged the Commissioners to go to the State Commission's website for a summary of laws that will have some impact on every woman in the State of California.

B. Lisa Blum, Young Women from Adversity to Resiliency Program (YWAR) Program Evaluator
Ms. Blum stated that she is a Clinical and Community Psychologist with experience in programs that serve children and families and in the design, delivery, and evaluation of those programs in the community. Ms. Blum stated that she first became involved with the YWAR Program several years ago when she was a researcher at UCLA.

Ms. Blum presented the results of the most recent evaluation of the YWAR Program. She began with some history and background of the evaluation process and an overview of the YWAR Program. She stated that the curriculum is primarily an activity-based curriculum that is delivered in classrooms, in school settings throughout the City and County. The curriculum begins with a unit on identity: who am I as a woman historically, culturally; and cumulates into a unit on a healthy future: what are my goals and intentions and plans for the future.

When asked about including an economic literacy component, Shannon Nemzer stated that the core topics in the program were identified by the YWAR participants as to what they need to talk about and hear about now. Because of the schools that the YWAR Program is in and the problems the participants are having at home, in their neighborhood and in their lives these topics are more critical to them.

Ms. Blum added that we were looking at the literature on juvenile justice as to what keeps girls out of the “system”. Looking at that literature and the funding streams have prompted us to move in this direction as well.

The key focus of the most recent evaluation, the 2006 2007 the last program year, was what is the effectiveness of the curriculum that we assessed through pre and post test measures of each unit in the curriculum. The results of the last evaluation were statistically significant results from the assessment of every unit in the curriculum; the curriculum was effective in getting across its message to the students. Overall the YWAR Program is successfully communicating its key messages to participants across the full curriculum.

Commissioner Pérez stated she would like to see something in writing as to how this program is being attached to their being able to get their GEDs or their high school diplomas. Ms. Nemzer stated that the topics are going to help them whether they graduate or not in terms of their health, in terms of being abused, basic things other than getting to high school graduation. The program deals with mostly continuation schools and the goal is for them to go back to their schools, but many times what happens depends on the environment of their schools or their families. Ms. Nemzer stated that there is so much more that the students are learning, so much personal information that they are learning.

V. LEGISLATION

Discussion of Commission action on the following bills:

H. R. 4054 & S. 2347 – Prevention Through Affordable Access Act. This measure will amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act to restore and protect access to discount drug prices for university-based safety-net clinics.

Staff and the Legislative Committee recommend support.

Serena Josef, on behalf of the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Project of Los Angeles County, urged the Board to adopt its resolution. Ms. Josef stated that affordable access to birth control is important to women’s health; it’s critically important to young women’s health and is one of the Project’s top priorities for this legislative session. She also thanked the Commission for all the work that it does on behalf of women’s health.

The bill was unanimously approved.

H. R. 20 – Melanie Blocker - Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act –

Introduced by Rep. Bobby Rush on January 4, 2007, this legislation would provide research on, and services for individuals with, postpartum depression and psychosis. This bill passed in the House of Representatives on October 15, 2007. On October 16, 2007, it was received in the Senate and read twice. Referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Staff recommends support.

The Legislative Committee requested more information from staff. Commissioner Córdoba recommended this bill be held in abeyance for more information.

H. R. 819 – Prevention First Act - Authored by Rep. Louise Slaughter on February 5, 2007, this bill expands access to preventive health care services that help reduce unintended pregnancy, reduce abortions, and improves access to women’s health care.

Staff and the Legislative Committee recommend support.

The bill was unanimously approved.

S.1843 - Fair Pay Restoration Act - This bill was introduced on July 20, 2007 by Senator Edward Kennedy. S.1843 seeks to amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1964 to clarify that an unlawful practice occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice.

Staff recommends support. Commissioner Córdoba stated that this bill has strong support from several women's rights organizations.

After discussion, this bill was unanimously approved.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Young Women from Adversity to Resiliency Program (YWAR) – Update on Conference
Hannah Farley reported that the date of the conference had to be moved to February 21, 2008. Shannon Nemzer is working on the catering and has found caterers who are willing to work within the conference budget. Ms. Farley stated that Commissioner DiPrima's suggestion to use Homeboy Industries for the gifts has been very helpful; they have purchased most of the gifts under budget. It is estimated that there will be about 270 students in attendance. Ms. Farley discussed the tentative conference workshop topics. Ms. Nemzer stated that the students chose the topics, primarily topics not covered in the curriculum. Staff is looking for resources, for people to run the workshops. Commissioners offered suggestions and support.

B. Urban Reproductive Health Summit – May 2008
Commissioner Córdoba stated that she and Commissioner Fogel serve on the steering committee on an initiative called the Urban Initiative, which is intended to bring together various cities across the country to develop both a policy agenda as well as practices around reproductive health care at the local level. They have encouraged the Mayor to participate in the program as well as other organizations that are active on this issue.

President Fogel stated for information only that the Small Business Administration has issued a proposed rule that would change the protective status of some women owned businesses when it comes to general contracting. There is a 45-day comment period that started on December 27, 2007. This is something that could possibly be forwarded to the City take a position on it.

Julie Maers stated that the National Organization of Women Business Owners has taken an opposing stand on this issue and is working against it; a press release was issued.

Commissioner Pérez stated that on January 22, 2008, Planned Parenthood will be hosting a rally to celebrate 35 years of Roe v. Wade, from 12:00 p.m.– 1:00 p.m. in front of the Federal Building, 11000 Wilshire Boulevard, in Westwood.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Eduardo Soriano Hewitt, Legislator Deputy for Councilmember Tony Cardenas, Councilmember for this district. Councilmember Cardenas is the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Gang Violence and Youth Development. Prior to his tenure in the City Council he was a member of the California State Assembly and authored AB1913, the JJCPA Schiff Cardenas Act. Councilmember Cardenas wanted to thank Commissioners and staff for their work. Mr. Hewitt stated that in regards to the Schiff Cardenas money - there was no coordinated effort in seeking this money. So the YWAR Program was one of the programs that was overlooked; when there is discussion about gangs people think male dominated hard core gangs. People forget about the gender specific services that are needed within the City, and YWAR addressed those issues. He stated that the Commission staff was an integral part in the restructuring of how we seek JJCPA funding. Councilmember Cardenas is familiar with gender specific programs and

encouraged people to go see YWAR staff interact with at risk youths at the continuation high schools.

Mr. Hewitt stated that tomorrow, there will be a press conference held by Councilmember Cardenas and Council President Eric Garcetti to honor CAST and LAPD, members of the Metropolitan Task Force on Human Trafficking and Slavery.

Bena Larkey, on behalf of "Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence" a non-profit organization, announced that the Make Mine a Million Dollar Program will be held on January 23, 2008 at the Globe Theater, Universal Studios. The mission is to sponsor growth of women owned businesses. The goal is to have a million women owned businesses reach a million dollars in revenue by the year 2010. The organization offers micro loans, and network support groups to help women reach their goals.

Julie Maers, representing four local international women's service organizations: Soroptimist International, Zonta, Business and Professional Women, and the American Association of University Women. Ms. Maers stated that they all share an interest in the status of the advancement of women and girls. All four organizations are accredited by the United Nations as non-governmental organizations. She stated that the 2006 Secretary General's report is a global report but has a lot of very useful information about the patterns of violence against women, what drives violence and what can be done to address violence. They are organizing a policy summit to be held on March 12, 2008 at the California Endowment for Healthy Communities.

Ms. Maers thanked the Commission for allowing Anne Dunn to work with them as a collaborator. She discussed the policy summit and what they hope to accomplish. President Fogel stated that the Commission looked forward to hearing what the policy recommendations are that come out of the summit.

Eve Sheedy stated that she is the domestic violence policy and legislative advisor for the City Attorney's office. She also is chair for the Legislative Committee of the Domestic Violence Task Force, and she is a board member and public policy liaison for the Statewide Domestic Violence Coalition, the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. Ms. Sheedy recommended that when the Commission creates its domestic violence policy that she be contacted or included; she is offering her services to the Commission to connect the Commission with organizations to work together on domestic violence. She stated that it is imported to speak with a unified voice to be heard. Commissioner Córdoba thanked Ms. Sheedy for offering her services.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

President Fogel thanked all in attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

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