



GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
OHIO CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ANGELA PHELPS-WHITE

June 25, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairman Wilkin, Vice-Chair Hillyer, and members of the Joint Sunset Review Committee. I am Angela Phelps-White, the Executive Director of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and on behalf of the Commission and Commissioners, we thank you for allowing our agency the opportunity to briefly share our history, purpose and goals with the Committee.

The Ohio Civil Rights Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1959. We are a neutral agency mandated to enforce Ohio laws against discrimination. The mission of the Commission is to promote positive human relations amongst Ohio's diverse population through education and the enforcement of laws against discrimination. We accomplish this mission through investigating charges of unlawful discrimination and providing education about civil rights.

We can also accomplish our mission pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 4112.04(B)(4), which authorizes the Commission to create local or statewide "advisory agencies and conciliation councils." However, before we could exercise this discretion, the Commission needed to move towards a more efficient way of managing its cases that have multiple stakeholders. As a result, we have incorporated a new automated case management system in order to centralize, manage, and track all cases filed with the agency, including the five regional offices. Now, the Commission has a resource that can serve as a foundation upon which we can build.

With the ability to create an advisory agency or council, coupled with our ability to track and identify trends, issues, and concerns relating to discrimination, the Commission is in a much better position to meet the statutory requirement of studying problems of discrimination in the various fields of human relationships and fostering good will through community efforts. The Commission will continue to offer in-depth training, presentations, and workshops. The Commission will also continue to be a neutral agency investigating charges of discrimination.

But our vision, now that we have the technology, is for our agency to be a one-stop shop. By staying in front of the trends, through data, charts, and graphs combined with the opportunity to gather additional information from an advisory agency and council, we can be a valuable resource for our sister agencies, partners, and boards. The Commission can successfully, and cost effectively serve Ohio's legislators and leaders for the good of all Ohio citizens.



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Although the Commission has not created an advisory agency or conciliation council, the Commission is currently in a better position to seize the opportunities provided by Ohio Revised Code 4112.04(B)(4). It is important to note that the creation of this council will not burden the state's budget considering the already established funding for the Commission itself, and the statutory requirement that any representative citizen serving on the agency or council shall do so without pay. In fact, it will be a cost savings statewide because this provision of the statute will allow the Commission to perform tasks and duties that special committees and tasks forces have previously been established and funded to perform.

Chairman Wilken, Vice Chairman Hillyer and the Joint Sunset Review Committee, I truly thank you for giving me this time to share with you the history and goals of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and giving me the opportunity to share our vision for staying informed and focused on issues of discrimination by maintaining the laws that have been put in place to protect Ohio citizens. The Commission can make use of the authority conferred by Ohio Revised Code 4112.04(B)(4) to address issues of discrimination, when necessary, in the future.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and I am happy to answer any questions you have regarding the important issues of civil rights in Ohio. Again, I thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angela Phelps-White".

Angela Phelps-White
Executive Director
Ohio Civil Rights Commission