

1980

State Advisory Committee Newsletter

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

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State Advisory Committee

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1980

ADVISORY COMMITTEE HEADS GET TOGETHER IN D.C.

Chairpersons and designated members from CCR's 51 state advisory committees came to Washington on October 13-15 for three days of discussion and planning among themselves, with staff and with Commission Chairman Arthur Flemming and the other Commissioners.

The 1980 conference occurred as Advisory Committee involvement in coordinated national projects reached a higher level than heretofore. The affirmative action study, conceived and agreed to at last year's conference, is nearing completion. Committees have pursued other concerns in response to headquarters leadership, such as the housing follow-up, monitoring of Klan resurgence, affirmative action hiring for the 1980 census and the voting rights projects. Based upon the concerns expressed by the participants at last year's conference, more time was allowed this year for direct interaction between the Commissioners and Committee leaders.

The first day's activities featured 10 regional caucuses. The caucuses enabled Committee leaders to identify issues they believed should have priority during the conference workshops. During an agenda-building session held later that day, each regional caucus made presentations itemizing those subject and process issues to be considered by the full group. Process issues included national and SAC programming, staff allocation, funding, Commissioner visits and SAC reports. Subject issues included programming in the areas of age and handicap, racial violence and hate groups, immigrants, sexual preference, unemployment and underemployment, police-community relations, affirmative action and the prison system.

On the second day, the Committee leaders were greeted by Louis Nunez, the Staff Director. Chairman Flemming gave the keynote address. The Chairman expressed concern over the more and more aggressive opponents of civil rights in the country. He said that the challenge of the Commission and others concerned with civil rights is to develop new methods to hold the ground gained and to win new ground. A discussion between the Commissioners and the SAC chairs followed; observations and recommendations made included:

- the regional offices working with the SACs need more staff help;
 - shorten the time it takes to get a SAC report out;
 - Commission and SAC press conferences should be coordinated, thus increasing their impact;
 - SACs should be involved from the beginning of the project rather than being brought in at the middle;
 - the Commission should use the SAC resources more effectively;
 - the Commission should call upon the FBI to enter the Atlanta situation;
 - the Commission should begin to deal with quality of education available to all students rather than focusing almost exclusively on school desegregation;
 - this country's support for foreign language study and bilingualism can enhance the effectiveness of its foreign policy; and
 - the Commission must recognize the growing suspicion of government bureaucracies in America.
- Most of these comments stimulated an exchange with the Commissioners.

SACtions (continued)

this valuable and useful first edition handbook, contact your regional office staff immediately.

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Minnesota SAC has released "School Desegregation in Duluth: Progress and Problems." In its 20-page statement, the SAC outlines the brief history of school desegregation efforts in Duluth since a 1979 decision of the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education in which three elementary schools were found to be segregated in violation of State regulations. It also reviews the various plans submitted by the school board, the varied reactions by diverse segments of the Duluth population to those plans, and the actions which are currently being implemented to bring the schools into compliance.

The SAC called on the Duluth school district to take whatever steps are necessary to assure that any desegregation plan implemented in 1981 does not involve one-way busing or in any way place the entire burden of desegregation on the minority community. It also urged the district to hold public hearings at each stage of the process for rejecting and selecting sites for the proposed magnet school. Finally, it urged the hiring of more minority faculty in addition to committing more local funds for the support of minority programs, including human relations in-service training for the staff.

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Two organizations representing native Hawaiians have filed suit in Federal court in an effort to force distribution of 190,000 acres of Hawaiian trust homelands. The suit which was

filed against the Department of Justice, is an outcome of the Hawaii SAC's study entitled, "Breach of Trust? Native Hawaiian Homelands." That report cited citizens' and organizations' complaints about abuses of the homeland trust. It said that trust homelands were illegally confiscated by government agencies; that thousands of native Hawaiian applicants were on waiting lists for homesteads while the majority of the trust homelands were under lease to the general public; and that native Hawaiians were being deprived of their right to property under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920.

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Idaho SAC's "A Roof Over Our Heads: Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Housing in Idaho," has stimulated some activity in the State. In addition to statewide news stories, SAC members appeared on a television talk show with a special assistant to the governor to discuss the report's findings and recommendations. In a letter to SAC chair Bernadine E. Ricker, the governor expressed a need to immediately follow up on the report and asked for the SAC's input on candidates for a governor's task force charged with the responsibility for implementing the recommendations.

The 99-page report culminates a year-long investigation of farmworker housing in southern Idaho. The committee found that many migrant workers in Idaho are subjected to "deplorable" living conditions and that migrant labor camps are rarely inspected for compliance with health and safety standards. Included among the recommendations was that the governor appoint a task force of knowledgeable and concerned citizens of the State to serve as an independent watchdog over migrant farmworker housing.

Illinois: Ms. Theresa Cummings
Chairperson

Indiana: Mrs. Harriette Conn
Chairperson

Iowa: Mr. Lee B. Furgerson
Chairperson

Kansas: Mr. Benjamin H. Day
Chairperson

Kentucky: Mr. James Rosenblum
Chairperson

Louisiana: Dr. Louis Pendleton
Member

Maine: Ms. Madeleine Giguere
Chairperson

Maryland: Mr. Newton I. Steers
Chairperson

Massachusetts: Dr. Bradford E. Brown
Chairperson

Michigan: Ms. Jo Ann Terry
Chairperson

Minnesota: Mrs. Ruth A. Myers
Vice Chairperson

Missouri: Mrs. Joanne Collins
Chairperson

Montana: Ms. Marie Sanchez
Member

Nebraska: Mrs. Shirley Marsh
Chairperson

Nevada: Mr. Woodrow Wilson
Chairperson

New Hampshire: Mrs. Sylvia Chaplain
Chairperson

New Jersey: Mr. Clyde Allen
Chairperson

New Mexico: Hon. Roberto Mondragon
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New York: Hon. Franklin
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Tennessee: Rev. Samuel B. Kyles
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Vice Chairperson

Utah: Mr. John Florez
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Washington: Ms. Katharine Bullitt
Chairperson

West Virginia: Mr. James McIntyre
Chairperson

Wisconsin: Mr. Percy Julian, Jr.
Chairperson

Wyoming: Mr. Fuji Adachi
Vice Chairperson

MATTERS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS . . .

"Veteran Sports Writer Honored" was the subject of an Omaha Star profile which featured Nebraska SAC member Charles Washington. Washington, a longtime sports writer and journalist with the newspaper was the recipient of the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame special merit award. "Through his dedicated service as a

spokesman, friend and counselor to the young people of the Black community, he has assisted Black athletes achieve a prominent and respected role in the Cornhusker tradition," the award read.

Nadine Hata, southern vice chair of the California SAC was one of 30 outstanding Southern California women

honored by the East Los Angeles Community Union.

Georgia SAC chair Edward Elson was honored by being named a fellow of Brandeis University. Additionally, a Georgia scholarship was established in his name and \$100,000 has been raised for the scholarship fund.

Dr. Tommie Young (N.C. SAC) was appointed to the Guilford County Involvement Council by the mayor. The Council makes policy and program recommendations for community services funded by the city of Greensboro. Young was also recently elected National Grammateus of the 25,000 member Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Nebraska SAC chair Shirley Marsh spoke at a luncheon in celebration of affirmative action week at the University of Nebraska.

Vermont SAC member Peter Woolfson spoke at a conference on Franco-Americans and French Canadians. Woolfson, a member of the anthropology department at the University of Vermont, discussed French contributions to the State of Vermont. The SAC co-sponsored the conference which was organized by the Vermont Council on the Arts and Humanities.

Massachusetts SAC chair Dr. Bradford E. Brown gave a presentation at the annual convention of the Massachusetts NAACP. Dorothy Jones (Mass. SAC) was nominated for appointment as the director of desegregation of the City of Cambridge Public Schools by the superintendent of schools.

New Jersey SAC chair Clyde Allen addressed the seventh annual conference of the New Jersey Association of Civil and Human Rights Agencies.

Woodrow Wilson, Nevada SAC chair was elected Commissioner of Clark County.

Florida SAC member Mary Ellen Hawkins won renomination to the State House of Representatives. Hawkins got 88 percent of the vote.

California SAC member Mervyn Dymally was successful in his bid for election to Congress. Dymally will

represent the 31st congressional district.

Herman Sillas, Jr., (California SAC chair), appeared before the State Assembly Select Subcommittee on Affirmative Action. Sillas' comments concerned State agencies' affirmative action efforts.

North Carolina SAC member Margaret Keese was elected to serve a third term in the North Carolina House of Representatives. Of the seven persons elected by the Guilford County voters, Keese received the highest number of votes, 51,324; Ms. E. Thelma Caldwell (N.C. SAC) received a certificate and pin from the mayor of Asheville for her civic involvement in a city-sponsored youth employment program.

Delaware SAC member Emily Morris was elected to a top administrative position in the Chancery Court for Kent County.

Midwestern Regional Office's Gregory Squires was recently appointed associate editor of the Journal of Intergroup Relations Officials which is published by the National Association of Human Rights Workers. SAC members are encouraged to submit a 10-15-page discussion or article on any aspect of civil rights to be considered for publication in the Journal. For details, contact Squires at the Midwestern Regional Office, 230 South Dearborn Street, 32nd Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60604 or call (314) 353-7479.

SACtions New Reports, Special Projects, Comments

Copies of the long-awaited State Advisory Committee Handbook were received just prior to the national SAC chair's conference and were duly circulated to the conference participants. Distribution to the full membership is being handled by the staff of regional offices. If you haven't received your copy of

SACtions (continued)

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REGIONAL DIRECTIONS

A report from Tom Neumann, Director, Office of Regional Programs

This newsletter first appeared a year ago, at the time the 1979 SAC Chair's conference was convened. That conference's physical and emotional ambience was not the best. Ensnared in a hotel already dead (laid to rest two weeks later), we had the misfortune of scheduling too many presentations which choked off much of the dialogue between the SAC Chairs and the Commissioners.

This year's opportunity for long-range planning enabled us to get better hotel accommodations and to build in more discussion. The general response from the participants with whom I've spoken, buttressed by their comments contained in reports of subsequent SAC meetings, was that the 1980 conference allowed more exchanging of views and sharing of ideas. At the next conference, we hope to have two full days of joint meetings with the Commissioners to allow for more dialogue and cooperative planning.

I had the privilege of opening this year's meeting, one which had many positive outcomes. Most notable of these was the closer relationship that developed between the field and headquarters. This important dynamic has been helped by frequent visits of Chairman Flemming and the Commissioners to SAC meetings. Certainly the flexibility of the Committees has gone far to accommodate such special assignments as the housing and affirmative action studies. Despite the increase of special reporting, we were able to maintain strong local programming in most cases.

With respect to the number of SAC reports, fiscal 1980 was a most productive year and the current year appears to be headed in the same direction. Part of the increase in the number of publications is attributable to a "fast-track" process whereby a project is completed in three months (from planning to press conference.). Some fine reports have already resulted.

On the negative side, we have overloaded our production line so that it now takes longer to print reports. But we have adjusted to this by releasing more reports in mimeograph form and distributing printed copies later. We hope that the new word processing equipment in field offices will be the long range solution.

As a tiny agency supporting the third or fourth largest Advisory Committee structure in the entire Federal government, the Commission is a model of citizen participation in government. The 1980 conference brought this into dramatic focus with its serious interchanges about real problems, a readiness to work together on these problems, and less concern about turf-guarding and protocol problems. Sensing that the 1980s will call for creative remedies to civil rights issues that continue to plague this country, the participants seemed prepared to provide the creative energy and leadership to both protect and expand on civil rights progress made thus far.

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