



# HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Embrace Diversity. End Discrimination.

## **2014 Annual Report**

**D. Michael Lyles, Esq., Executive Director**

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## Executive Director's Summary



### Dear Citizens, Visitors and Friends of Prince George's County,

This most recent fiscal year (FY14) which ended on June 30, 2014, reveals an agency solidly dedicated to producing top notch investigations, mediations, prosecutions and adjudication of discrimination complaints. Unfortunately, the Commission has also had to deal with the impact of lower than expected county revenues, which impacts our budget and the ability to do all of the things we would like to do to stay one of the best civil rights enforcement agencies in the region. Additionally, having suffered the loss of three staff investigators during FY14 impacted our ability to stay ahead of our self-imposed standard of resolving cases within 180 days and meeting our target of EEOC cases processed pursuant to our Workshare Agreement with that federal agency. Despite some changes and setbacks, we remain confident in our ability to take on the tough civil rights cases and thereby produce a safer and less discriminatory environment for our residents and visitors.

If fiscal year 2014 will be known for anything, it must be the work of the Commission and staff to take on the efforts to end human trafficking. Along with our agency partners throughout county government, NGOs and with the blessing of the County Executive and the County Council we were able to do more than any other local jurisdiction to address this issue, including advocating the passage of various state-wide bills aimed at protecting children and other victims of human trafficking in Maryland. We pushed the envelope and increased awareness, rescued victims and crafted a Task Force that has spurred other task force efforts throughout the region. The work of former Commissioner Walakewon Blegay, as well as current Commission Chair Nichele Vaughan and Councilwoman Karen R. Toles is worthy of special recognition for bringing this issue to light and supporting a framework for continued efforts to combat human trafficking in Prince George's County.

As our County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III begins his last term, I wish to congratulate him on winning a second term and being supportive of the Human Relations Commission – "the small agency with the big mission". We look forward to continuing on the path to greatness, or as he recently put it, the off ramp to our destiny. Our work with the Commissioners and businesses and everyday citizens of this county continues and this report provides an overview of what we were able to accomplish despite challenges. This Annual Report, covering the period from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, is a window into the accomplishments and activities of the Commission team in FY14. We hope you find it useful in assessing our ability to provide great service in a changing and challenging fiscal environment and help Prince George's County "Embrace Diversity and End Discrimination."

Sincerely,

*D. Michael Lyles*

D. Michael Lyles, Esquire  
Executive Director

## Letter from Commission Chair



**Dear Citizens of Prince Georges County,**

Our landscape for human rights is constantly changing. This fiscal year the Human Relations Commission has taken an even more proactive approach to protecting the civil rights of the citizens of Prince Georges County and navigating our dynamic environment. By refining our processes and taking a visible and aggressive stance against discrimination, we have strengthened our foundation for justice and community service.

We live in a climate where parties to discrimination cases are more informed. Complainants understand their rights and in general, respondents have an awareness of their responsibilities. Our response to this has been to tighten our processes for reviewing and adjudicating discrimination cases. We've accomplished this by creating a protocol for review, which enables us to meticulously examine each appeal while, at the same time, maintain methodical integrity. Making sound and just decisions based on the facts is our ultimate goal.

To support these enhancements, we partnered with our counsel to the Commission to develop the most extensive Commissioner training that we've had within the past seven years. Each Commissioner has been trained and serves with an even more in-depth comprehension of what it takes to fulfill our mission from both an operational and legal perspective.

In addition, part of our mission includes taking the steps necessary to prevent discrimination. This year we have projected our voice on global, national, and local issues in a deliberate effort to combat discrimination and crimes against humanity. We recognize that supporting these broader efforts has a direct impact on our ability to be successful at a local level. This year the Commission issued a resolution condemning Boko Haram's abduction of Nigerian schoolgirls. We also joined with other local agencies supporting a written appeal to the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy recommending how the federal government can support state and local agencies working to protect human rights. At a local level, we were successful in getting several bills passed including the legislation that increased the damages cap to two hundred thousand dollars. This legislation allows for steeper penalties for parties who violate civil rights and increased remedies for victims.

Overall, we have had a successful year in that every action that we've taken has had a positive impact on our service to the community. Moving forward, the Commission will continue to be proactive in order to address the needs of our county. Adapting as necessary, we will maintain a strong voice against civil rights violations and ensure justice for victims of discrimination.

Sincerely,

*Nichele Vaughan*

Nichele Vaughan  
Chairperson

# Our Guiding Principles

## VISION

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION IS COMMITTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY: WHERE ALL ARE FREE TO PURSUE THEIR TALENTS AND DREAMS UNHINDERED BY BIAS, MISUNDERSTANDING AND CONFLICT BASED ON RACE, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, OCCUPATION, MARITAL STATUS, POLITICAL OPINION, PERSONAL APPEARANCE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABILITY, OR FAMILIAL STATUS.

## MISSION

IT SHALL BE THE MISSION OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION, AS THE COUNTY'S CIVIL RIGHTS EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT AGENCY TO:

- Provide residents, businesses and visitors an efficient and cost effective administrative alternative for investigating, mediating and adjudicating complaints of unlawful discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, law enforcement, education, public accommodations and real estate transactions;
- Be professional, competent and fair to all those we serve;
- Value Staff for their skill, dedication and creativity—in turn, the Commission will provide a positive work environment based on mutual respect and dignity, where personal and professional development is encouraged;
- Always seek ways to improve our systems and processes in the interest of producing more thorough investigations while resolving cases in a timely manner;
- Work to ensure that our services are equally accessible to those of various abilities and of limited English proficiency

## CORE VALUES

**PUBLIC SERVICE:** We are committed to serving and educating the public in a professional, impartial and efficient manner. Quality investigations, alternative dispute resolution and adjudications will be accomplished by utilizing skilled and motivated employees who are responsive to the needs of those who interface with the Commission.

**DEDICATION:** We will demonstrate our commitment to public service by being responsible, dependable and proactive professionals who will exhibit pride and excellence in fulfilling our mission.

**TEAMWORK:** We will empower our employees to achieve a quality work product and harmonious work environment through open communication, positive interaction and the spirit of cooperation.

**RESPECT:** We respect the diversity, talents and ideas of all Commission Staff, our most valued resource. We honor the right of every member of our team and the public to contribute, to be heard and to be treated with dignity.

**INTEGRITY:** We pledge to fulfill our duties and responsibilities without bias and the aim of producing the right result in the public interest.

# Legislative Initiatives

## Division 12 Legislative Initiative

The Commission initiated legislation to create an additional class of protected individuals under Division 12 of the Prince George's County Code. Through Councilmember Obie Patterson, a CB-78-2014 or Ban the Box, was introduced in 2014 to make it illegal for employers to inquire into an applicant's criminal background until *after* the first interview. This bill would also make it illegal for employers to request such information on their applications.

The purpose of this legislation is to remove a persistent barrier to many residents in the County, a negative criminal history. Many eligible applicants are often kept out of their desired job markets due to their criminal background. This legislation will allow individuals like these the opportunity to at least be interviewed and considered for a position before there is the taint of a criminal background inquiry. Additionally, this legislation also hopes to eradicate the disproportionate impact premature inquires into an applicant's criminal background has on minority applicants, especially when the crimes are often minor offenses.

The Commission was also successful in creating legislation to increase the amount of compensatory and civil damages that we are able to seek to redress the wrongs done to our complainants. CB-85-2014 was also passed in 2014 and goes into effect immediately.



- ▲ DIVISION 12
- ▲ HUMAN TRAFFICKING INITIATIVES AND BAN THE BOX

## APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Q1) Have you ever been convicted of or plead guilty to a criminal offense?

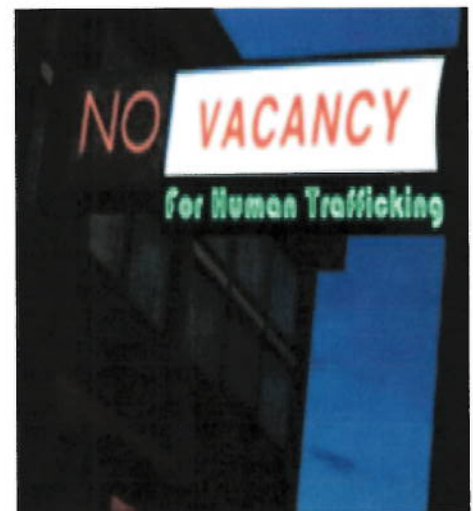
YES  
 NO  
 NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS



## Human Trafficking Initiatives and legislation

The Human Relations Commission, stand against the scourge of Human Trafficking of children in our County and across the State. In July of 2012 a resolution passed by the Prince George's County Council established the first local government task force to combat Labor and Sex Trafficking in the state. Since then, we have learned much about Human Trafficking and the commercial sex trade of our citizens, especially children from within and from outside our County, we have fought and organized to keep together a federation of government agencies, non-profits, churches, individuals and county-based companies.

Through the combined efforts of the various organizations within the Human Trafficking Task Force, we have been able to successfully pass three Human Trafficking Bills, CB-79-2014, CB-80-2014 and CB-81-2014. CB-79-2014 makes it illegal for lodging establishments to rent rooms by the hour, this has the effect of thwarting opportunities for human traffickers to profit from their conduct. CB-80-2014 requires lodging establishments to train their employees on how to detect human trafficking violations. CB-81-2014 implements more stringent requirements for massage establishments, operators, managers and technicians. The Commission hopes to continue making strides towards eradicating human trafficking in the coming fiscal year.



**TABLE OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ACT**

**CURRENT ORDINANCE**

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ACT CAPS DAMAGE AWARD AMOUNT TO \$100,000

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ACT CAPS CIVIL FINES @ \$5,000

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ACT DOES NOT AUTHORIZE ASSESSMENT OF FINES & PENALTIES FOR INCLUSION IN CONSENT SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS DURING THE CONCILIATION PROCESS

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ACT PROHIBITS EMPLOYERS FROM ASKING ABOUT AN APPLICANTS CRIMINAL BACKGROUND UNTIL AFTER THE FIRST INTERVIEW.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION**

CB-79-2014: HUMAN TRAFFICKING - LODGING ESTABLISHMENTS - ROOM RENTAL

CB-80-2014: HUMAN TRAFFICKING - LODGING ESTABLISHMENTS - EMPLOYEE TRAINING

CB-81-2014 -MESSAGE ESTABLISHMENTS

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

**PASSED:** INCREASE DAMAGE AWARD AMOUNT TO \$200,000

**PASSED:** INCREASE CIVIL FINE AMOUNT TO \$10,000

**PASSED:** AUTHORIZE ASSESSMENT OF FINES & PENALTIES BY THE COMMISSION FOR INCLUSION IN CONSENT SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS DURING THE CONCILIATION PROCESS

**PASSED:** Ban the Box: A bill introduced by Councilman Obie Patterson, to add language to the Human Relations Act (Division 12) to make it a violation to discriminate against a candidate for employment based simply on discovery of negative criminal history, until at least after the conclusion of the first interview. The bill makes it a civil rights violation for an employer to inquire about an employment candidate's criminal history until after the first interview has concluded. This bill took effect January 20, 2015.

The Executive Director of the Prince George's County Human Relations Commission and his staff endeavored to create a Human Trafficking taskforce to combat the prevalence of human trafficking in our area. As a result of our involvement, we have been instrumental in getting several pieces of legislation passed.

**PASSED:** this bill prohibits room rentals by the hour. This bill is particularly helpful towards thwarting human trafficking because the majority of human trafficking activity takes place in hotels or motels that will allow room rentals by the hour. If such a practice is made illegal, it reduces opportunities for promoting human trafficking and effectively serves its purpose.

**PASSED:** this bill requires the training of employees of lodging establishments to detect instances of human trafficking. At these lodging establishments employees do not know how to detect a human trafficking situation. This bill would require employers to train their employees on how to detect human trafficking and these training tools will be supervised by law enforcement.

**PASSED:** this bill requires additional information for licensing of massage establishments, operators, managers and technicians. A large amount of human trafficking also takes place in massage parlors that are used for human trafficking purposes. Requiring more stringent checks on licensures for these places works to reduce the potential occurrences of human trafficking.

**Our Performance**

The Prince George's County Human Relations Commission measures performance via the following: See Addendums 1 through 6

## Outreach & Education

The practice of connecting the Community to information, services, education and opportunity is defined as Outreach & Education. For The Prince George's County Human Relations Commission, this practice is a performance cornerstone. For this reporting period, the Commission has continued to improve and expand on its existing Outreach & Education Initiatives while engaging the Community through a variety of Outreach opportunities.

**Civil Rights Fellowship Program:** The Prince George's County Human Relations Commission continues to seek committed attorneys and other professionals for participation in this annual Civil Rights Fellowship Program. Under the program, persons with a committed interest in civil rights law will serve as Fellows to the Human Relations Commission, serving at the pleasure of the Executive Director. Fellows are encouraged to take part in monthly Commission meetings and Public Hearings as well as participate in Outreach activities. The monthly Commission meetings and hearings before the Commission offer a candidate a first-hand opportunity to witness and assist with the Commission's processes and to observe how the rights of those discriminated against are championed by this independent government entity.

**Outreach to the Latino Community:** The Prince George's County Human Relations Commission will continue its outreach efforts and collaboration through its "CASA de Maryland" initiative. CASA was founded in 1985 to improve the quality of life and legal justice for Latinos and low-income families through education, training and advocacy services. CASA does not accept complaints and therefore refers housing discrimination and other types of discrimination complaints to the Commission.

### OTHER OUTREACH & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THIS REPORTING PERIOD INCLUDE

- July 17, 2013 – Executive Director Lyles was the guest speaker - Prince George's County Commission for Individuals with Disabilities to discuss discrimination as it relates to disability;
- August 21, 2013 – Attended the Woodland Job Corps Open House;
- September 21, 2013 – Participated in Community Day at the Ark of Safety Christian Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
- October 26, 2013 – Attended the Women's Legislative Conference (WE3) at Prince George's Community College;
- November 4, 2013 – PGC Fire Department Training Session, Suitland, Maryland;
- December 2, 2013 – Attended PGC Human Trafficking Task Force Training event at Newton White Mansion in Mitchellville, Maryland;
- February 7, 2014 – 2014 Annual Human Rights Day in Annapolis, Maryland;
- February 20, 2014 – Attended the Funders Breakfast – Human Trafficking Event in Baltimore, Maryland;
- April 25, 2014 – Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Symposium (Fair Housing Issues) at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in Baltimore, Maryland;
- May 5, 2014 – Participated in the PGC Human Trafficking Task Force Training Session at Bowie State University;



Robert L. Baker, III  
County Executive

▪ May 19, 2014 – 2014 Governor’s Conference on Combatting Human Trafficking in Maryland at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville, Maryland;

- June 14, 2014 – 2014 Housing Fair at the PGC Sports and Learning Complex in Landover, Maryland.

## Meet Our Commissioners



### **Chairperson – Nichele Vaughan:**

Chair Vaughan has been a resident of Prince George's County since 2006. Chair Vaughan's spirit for advocating the civil rights of the citizens of Prince George's county led to her appointment as a Commissioner in 2007. In 2011, she was appointed Chairperson of the Commission and continues to serve in this leadership capacity. Subsequently, Chair Vaughan is also a member of the Commission's Executive Committee and continues to work diligently to support anti-discrimination legislation, adjudicate discrimination cases and find creative ways to engage in community outreach. Ms. Vaughan also serves on the Victim Services Committee of the Prince Georges County Human Trafficking Task Force. Chair Vaughan has a Bachelors of Science in Finance and a Masters of Business Administration degree from George Mason University. She also has a Masters of Arts in Education and Human Development from the George Washington University. Chair Vaughan worked for a Fortune 500 company for over ten years supporting government clients and she is also a former 3<sup>rd</sup> grade educator. Currently, Chair Vaughan serves on the board of Joe's Movement Emporium, a non-profit performing arts organization that offers programs in education, production, and artists services for both youth and adults. Chair Vaughan is also a licensed realtor and a certified yoga and Qigong instructor. She teaches group yoga classes and provides private, therapeutic yoga services to individual clients in Maryland and the District of Columbia.



### **Vice-Chairperson – Merrill Smith Jr.:**

Commissioner Merrill Smith, Jr. is a small business owner and the Vice-Chair for the Prince George's County Human Relations Commission. Prior to joining the Commission, Mr. Smith worked in the private sector for nearly 25 years in various capacities including Chief Operating Officer, Vice-President of Operations, and Regional Vice-President. A native of Georgia, Mr. Smith has a passion for Civil and Human Rights that has led him to serve as a Commissioner.

Commissioner Smith is President of Van McCoy legacy branch of ASALH, a proud supporter of the 105 Voices of History Choir and is a graduate and lifetime alumni of The Ohio State University. Mr. Smith also has a Lean Six Sigma Certificate from Villanova University. Commissioner Smith has been a resident of Prince George's County since relocating to the area in 2003.



**Secretary- Nora Eidelman:**

Commissioner Nora Eidelman was born in Asunción, Paraguay and currently resides in College Park, MD. Commissioner Eidelman is a graduate of the University of Maryland University College, and is currently employed with Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, Inc., where she serves as Deputy Director. Commissioner Edelman served on several boards including the Prince George's County Child Resource Center and the Family Crisis Center. She was the co-chair of the Hispanic Community Task Force, a member of the Prince George's County Circuit Court Latino Task Force, a founding member of the Prince George's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a founding member of the Maryland Latino Coalition for Justice.



**Commissioner Katrina Burson:**

Commissioner Burson has been a professional registered nurse for 20 years. She is currently employed as a Clinical Research Associate for a large non-profit organization in Rockville, Maryland. Commissioner Burson has spent most of her career caring for and advocating on behalf of vulnerable populations. Commissioner Burson is also a strong supporter and activist for LGBTQ equality and is passionate about building relationships for and with the LGBTQ community. The right of equality should not be mutable based on ethnicity, race, sex, gender or sexual orientation. Commissioner Burson was born and raised in Houston, Texas but relocated to Maryland in 2012. Commissioner Burson lived abroad in London, England for nearly a decade. While there she worked on numerous projects on behalf of the LGBT Community. She carried her passion to Maryland and continues to be a volunteer with the Prince George's County Youth Equality Project. Commissioner Burson is married to her partner, Kenya. They have one son, Kenneth, who is currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. In her spare time she develops real estate. Commissioner Burson is proud to be living in a state that recognizes marriage equality and actively seeks to unite communities and reduce discriminatory practices in public domains.



**Commissioner Gerald Folsom:**

Commissioner Folsom, son of Mary Nell and late George Thomas Folsom, is originally from Quitman, Georgia and is employed by the U.S. Department of Transportation as a Senior Transportation Specialist in Washington, D.C. He currently serves on the ministerial staff of Community of Hope AME church under the direction of Rev. Tony Lee in Hillcrest Heights, MD. He serves as ministry leader of Community of Hope's Social Justice and Public Service Ministry and Assistant Men's Ministry leader. On Friday, April 11, 2014, Commissioner Folsom was ordained as an itinerant elder in the AME Church at the Washington Annual AME Conference. Commissioner Folsom has received his Ph.D. in Communication and Culture from Howard University in Washington, D.C., Master of Divinity from Howard University, his M.A. in Organizational Communication from Bowie State University in Bowie, MD, and B.S. in Liberal Arts from Excelsior College in Albany, NY. Commissioner Folsom is a life member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and currently serves as the Second District Chaplain, overseeing the spiritual needs of Omega men in Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. Commissioner Folsom served as the Co-Chairman of the Public Engagement Committee on the Transition Team for the Honorable Rushern L. Baker III, County Executive, Prince George's County, MD. On November 7, 2012, he was appointed by the Prince George's County Executive as a Commissioner on the County's Human Relations Commission (County's Civil Rights Agency). He is married to Joyce Folsom and they reside in Upper Marlboro, MD.



**Commissioner Gail Heath:**

Commissioner Heath is a labor relations professional, with experience working for labor unions and management in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Commissioner Heath has a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Juris Doctorate from the Howard University School of Law. Commissioner Heath is originally from Chicago, IL, and has a brother who proudly serves in the U.S. Army and a sister. She has served as a Commissioner since 2012 and is a resident of Laurel.



**Commissioner Walter L. Howell Jr.:**

Commissioner Howell has broad public sector management, administrative and supervisory experience. He recently directed the D.C. Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services – Office of Internal Integrity overseeing the agency’s Investigation Division and Administrative Hearings Division. He also served as a child support enforcement executive with the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. Commissioner Howell was also selected by Maryland State Superintendent of Schools to serve as the Maryland State Department of Education Liaison Officer to Prince George’s County Public Schools concerning the governance, management and finance of the public school system. Commissioner Howell has also served as a commissioner for the Prince George’s County Commission for Children, Youth and Families; and the Prince George’s County Board of Social Services. Commissioner Howell holds a Master in Public Administration degree from Harvard University, a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pennsylvania, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Morehouse College and is also a graduate of the United States Presidential Management Fellows Program and the Johns Hopkins University Leadership Development Program for Minority Managers.



**Commissioner Eric Jackson:**

Commissioner Jackson is a partner with The Sack Law Firm P.C., a full service law firm based in McLean, Virginia. He has a diverse law practice which includes representation of individuals, law firms, associations and emerging and large companies in business litigation, employment and intellectual property cases. Commissioner Jackson also assists families and children with special needs in navigating the educational and legal labyrinths necessary to obtain special education services. Prior to joining The Sack Law Firm P.C., Commissioner Jackson was a partner at Jenner & Block LLP and Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P. in Washington, D.C. Commissioner Jackson earned an A.B., Values, Technology, Science and Society from Stanford University and a J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School. Commissioner Jackson is active in the community. On November 7, 2012, he was sworn in as a Commissioner of the Prince George’s County Human Relations Commission. He previously served as Vice Chair of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Committee. A father of three active children, Commissioner Jackson resides in Fort Washington, Maryland.



**Commissioner Janelle Johnson:**

A native of Hampton, Virginia, Commissioner Janelle Johnson attended the University of Illinois with a full scholarship in track and field. She competed in the 1995 Olympic Festival and qualified for the 1996 Olympic Trials. Commissioner Johnson transferred to George Mason University graduating with a degree in Broadcast Journalism, later receiving her Master's Degree in Business from Johns Hopkins University, after relocating to the Washington D.C. area in 1998. She has held positions in various technology companies, including Sprint and Lockheed Martin, where she served as corporate Diversity Manager. Her current work assignment is with the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) in the Office of the Secretary. She is also an ordained minister on the ministerial staff of Reid Temple AME Church. Commissioner Johnson believes her greatest commitment is to serve God, people, and the community.



**Commissioner Eugene Langbehn:**

Commissioner Langbehn is a retired career and vocational rehabilitation counselor with a Master's degree in counseling and personnel services with specialization in counseling individuals who have disabilities. Commissioner Langbehn has an AA degree in Paralegal Studies. Previously, Commissioner Langbehn was employed in administrative positions with the State of Maryland, including legal assistant to the State Appeals Officer for the Department of Human Resources. He was appointed to the Prince George's County Human Relations Commission in 2012 and also serves on the Prince George's County Commission for Individuals with Disabilities. Commissioner Langbehn founded and chairs Maryland United for Peace and Justice, a statewide non-profit, advocacy and education coalition. He serves on boards of non-profits, including Pax Christi Metro DC and Baltimore, and Progressive Maryland, and he helped found Maryland Committee to Amend. Previously, Commissioner Langbehn was an elected member of the Democratic State Central Committee of Maryland and Political Action Chair of the AFSCME State Employees Council 92. As a Chief Steward with AFSCME, he handled employee grievances. His disabilities include multiple chemical sensitivity and toxic encephalopathy. After becoming disabled, Commissioner Langbehn served on the Governor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities and The Advisory Board of the ADA Information Center for the Mid- Atlantic Region.



**Commissioner Troy Lowe, Esquire:**

Commissioner Lowe is a product of the Prince George's County. He matriculated through St. John's Catholic school, then Surrattsville Senior High School, both in Clinton, Maryland. He was a four year letterman in football at Surrattsville. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Johnson C. Smith University, Commissioner Lowe went on to pursue his juris doctorate in 2005 at The Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan. Commissioner Lowe was admitted to the Maryland bar in 2009 and began practicing law as a contract attorney with the United States Department of Justice. In 2011, Commissioner Lowe opened his private practice in Upper Marlboro, Maryland where he focuses on personal injury litigation and family law matters. Commissioner Lowe prides himself on the level of service and attention he provides to each client. His top priority is to ensure each client is confident that their best legal interests are represented. In 2014, Commissioner Lowe was appointed as a Commissioner of the Human Relations Commission where he serves to protect the civil rights of the residents of Prince George's County.



**Commissioner Seth Zirkle:**

Commissioner Zirkle is an attorney with the firm of Reno & Cavanaugh, PLLC, and was appointed a Commissioner in June 2014. Prior to Commissioner Zirkle's appointment to the Commission, he served the City of Annapolis Human Relations Commission as counsel. Seth lives in Cheverly, Maryland, with his wife and daughter.

COMMISSION PERFORMANCE MEASURES (Addendum 1)

Proposed Changes	Objective	yes	Measure Name	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Estimated	FY 2016 Projected
2.2	2.2	Yes	<b>Resources (input)</b>					
	2.2	yes	Number of commission mediators	2	2	2	2	2
	2.2	Yes	<b>Workload, Demand and Production (output)</b>					
	2.2	no	Number of mediations scheduled	50	60	24	50	24
	2.2	no	Number of conciliations scheduled	3	6	6	6	6
	2.2	no	Number of mediations conducted	36	40	17	35	17
	2.2	no	Number of conciliations conducted	3	6	4	3	4
	2.2	no	Number of mediations closed with settlement	18	20	10	17	10
	2.2	no	Number of cases that reached a resolution through conciliation	1	4	3	3	3
<b>Delete Measure</b>	2.2	no	Number of mediations referred back without settlement	18	20	n/a	n/a	n/a
2.2	2.2	Yes	<b>Efficiency</b>					
	2.2	no	Number of ADR sessions conducted per mediator	18.0	20.0	10.5	19.0	10.5
<b>Delete Measure</b>	2.2	no	Number of conciliations per Mediator (combined with number above)	0.5	2.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
2.2	2.2	Yes	<b>Quality</b>					
	2.2	no	Percentage of mediated cases that reached an agreement	50%	50%	59%	49%	59%
	2.2	no	Percentage of cases that reached a resolution through conciliation	33%	67%	75%	100%	75%
	2.2	no	Percentage of customers satisfied with mediation services	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2.2	2.2	Yes	<b>Impact (outcome)</b>	2%				
	2.2	no	Percentage of discrimination cases that reached an agreement through ADR	49%	52%	43%	52.63%	43%

**COMMISSION PERFORMANCE MEASURES (ADDENDUM 1)**

Proposed Changes	Objective	Yes	Measure Name	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Estimated	FY 2016 Projected
		Yes	<b>Resources (input)</b>					
	4.1	no	Number of Investigators	7	8	6	6	6
		Yes	<b>Workload, Demand and Production (output)</b>					
	4.1	no	Number of intake interviews conducted	328	300	144	146	144
	4.1	no	Number of Cases opened as result of intakes conducted	284	216	70	56	70
	4.1	no	Number of investigated complaints with "cause" findings	10	32	5	0	5
	4.1	no	Number of investigated complaints with "no cause" findings	147	184	33	54	33
	4.1	no	Number of administrative closures and voluntary withdrawals	n/a	n/a	15	30	15
	4.1	no	Number of investigated cases closed w/ 180 days	n/a	n/a	23	22	23
	4.1	no	Number of closed investigations subject to quality audit	20	30	30	30	30
	4.1	no	Number of "no cause" findings appealed to the Commission	n/a	n/a	7	8	7
	4.1	no	Number of subpoenas served by investigators	n/a	n/a	3	2	3
	4.1	no	Number of MP/IA requests processed by staff	n/a	n/a	11	2	11
		Yes	<b>Efficiency</b>					
	4.1	no	Average number of cases investigated per investigator	41	27	11	12	11
	4.1	no	Average number of open cases per month	n/a	n/a	62	25	62
		Yes	<b>Quality</b>					
	4.1	no	Average case age in days	447	220	255	255	255
	4.1	no	Percentage of cases closed within 180 days	n/a	n/a	33%	39%	33%
	4.1	no	Audit Score of closed audited cases (out of 10)	8.32	8.38	9.25	9.00	9.25
		Yes	<b>Impact (outcome)</b>					
	4.1	no	Percentage of investigative findings sustained by the Commission	n/a	99%	100%	99%	100%

COMMISSION PERFORMANCE MEASURES (ADDENDUM 1)

	4.1	no	Percentage of "no-cause" findings reversed or remanded by the Commission	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Proposed Changes	Objective	yes	Measure Name	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Estimated	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2014 Actual
	4.2	no	Number of commissioners	9	11	13	12	13	13
	4.2	no	Number of cases certified for public hearing	0	2	4	2	4	4
	4.2	no	Number of hearings held	1	2	1	1	1	1
	4.2	no	Number of decisions issued	1	2	1	0	1	1
	4.2	no	Number of decisions issued within 180 days	n/a	1	1	1	1	1
	4.2	no	Number of decisions appealed to Circuit Court	0	0	1	0	1	1
	4.2	no	Number of decisions overturned on appeal	n/a	n/a	0	1	0	0
	4.2	no	Number of Outreach Events attended	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	5
		Yes	<b>Efficiency</b>						
	4.2	no	Percentage of decisions issued within 180 days	0%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		Yes	<b>Quality</b>						
	4.2	no	Percentage of decisions overturned on appeal	n/a	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	4.2	no	Average number of days decisions are issued after a hearing	365	180	180	180	180	180
	4.1	Yes	<b>Impact (outcome)</b>						
	4.2	no	Number of decisions issued in favor of Complainant	0	1	0	0	0	0
	4.2	no	Number of decisions overturned on appeal	0	0	0	0	0	0

# HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION – 113 (ADDENDUM 2)

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## MISSION AND SERVICES

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**Mission** - The Human Relations Commission investigates and adjudicates violations of the County's Human Relations Ordinance prohibiting unlawful discrimination in the county. All this in order to promote an active, informed, engaged and vibrant civic culture as well as to foster a strong connection between all those who live, work, and play in the County.

**Core Services** -

- Mediation and alternate dispute resolution, with a special emphasis on diverting minor civil matters and domestic disputes from the court system
- Community outreach to inform individuals, businesses, constituency groups and non-profit service providers about the activities of County government as well as their rights responsibilities, and opportunities to participate in improving quality of life in the County
- Human Relation Commission: Investigation and administrative resolution of complaints of unlawful discrimination in the areas of Employment, Housing, Real Estate Transactions, Financial Lending, Education, Law Enforcement, and Public Accommodations

**Strategic Focus in FY 2016** -

The agency's top priorities in FY 2016 are:

- Increase the percentage of disputes that are resolved through mediation by utilizing an internal case management system to assist in the administration of the dispute resolution program
- Human Relations Commission: Increase the number of discrimination cases resolved through community education, aggressive and timely enforcement of the County's anti-discrimination laws and pursuit of relief for victims and payment of fines and assessments.

## FY 2016 BUDGET SUMMARY

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**GOAL 2** - To provide mediation services to County residents and businesses in order to facilitate resolution of community disputes and civil rights discrimination complaints.

**Objective 2.1** - Increase the percentage of community mediation cases reaching settlement through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) tools.

Targets	Long Term Target Compared with Performance
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**Strategies to Accomplish the Objective** -

- **Strategy 2.1.1** - Utilize an internal case management system to assist in the administration of the dispute resolution program
- **Strategy 2.1.2** - Provide intensive and skills-based training, apprenticeships, continuing education and ongoing evaluation of volunteer mediators in order to ensure mediators possess the needed skills, knowledge and resources
- **Strategy 2.1.3** - Educate the community members about conflict resolution and mediation

**Objective 2.2** - Increase the percentage of civil rights/discrimination complaints resolved as a result of the effective use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques.

**Trend and Analysis** - OCRs mediation staff, along with the Commission's Executive Director are solely responsible for educating parties in civil rights disputes about the advantages of ADR. Over the last two years since the OCR has supported the Commission, there has been a marked increase in complainants opting to attempt negotiated settlements of their cases filed. ADR staff constantly train and stay up to date with the latest information and trends in the ADR to better be able to help parties reach mutually acceptable agreements to resolve claims. Staff shortages and management changes have caused a decrease in the number of cases referred for ADR as compared to the previous two years, when the

## **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION - 113**

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program was in its inception. Additional resources and dedicated staff have a high probability of producing significant increases in resolutions year over year. We estimate .5 to 1 FTEs can increase settlements 100% or more.

### **Performance Measures – See Attached Performance Measures**

#### **Strategies to Accomplish the Objective -**

- **Strategy 2.2.1** - Ensure printed mediation material is provided and an ADR consult is completed with each complainant
- **Strategy 2.2.2** - Conduct at least three ADR conferences per month
- **Strategy 2.2.3** - Ensure mediators receive at least 8 hours of external expert ADR training annually

**GOAL 4 – HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:** To aggressively investigate and fairly adjudicate claims of unlawful discrimination occurring within Prince George's County in order to encourage fairness and equal treatment under the law.

**Objective 4.1** – Increase the percentage of investigations meeting pre-established criteria for timeliness, thoroughness, and objectivity.

**Trend and Analysis** – In FY 2013, the Commission completely closed out the last of its aged case backlog of over 130 cases, open more than one year without resolution. Additionally, the Commission resolved 100% of the cases taken pursuant to the Work-share Agreement with the EEOC. FY2014 saw unexpected reductions in operating budget along with resignation of three investigators midyear. The Commission saw an increase in new assignments from the County Council and the County Executive, related to Human Trafficking Task Force activities and non-traditional investigations, i.e. In Re Village Green. In FY2015, the Executive Director reassessed staffing which led to a modification of the staff compliment which reduced the number of investigators by one in exchange for a paralegal position to handle investigation administration and produce other investigative efficiencies. One investigator position remains unfilled due to budget constraints and will likely remain unfilled into FY2016. The Commission staff and budget constraints caused underperformance of the EEOC Work-share Agreement obligations which produced less contract revenue as a result, although fines and assessments collected as a result of "Cause" cases remained relatively on target. Despite this, the Annual Quality Audit at the end of FY2014 indicated qualitative improvement in investigations per industry standards. The Performance Measures are still undergoing some adjustment over time based on new realities and to more properly align them with measurable tasks more typically associated with civil rights enforcement functions, but the Quality Audit Program now in its third year provides a data driven mechanism for assessing whether investigations are meeting the pre-established criteria for timeliness, thoroughness and objectivity. Investigative staff showed marked improvement in investigation timeliness and quality from the first Audit conducted in FY12 when staff produced a score of 8.32 out of a possible 10; 8.38 in FY13; and 9.25 in FY14.

### **Performance Measures – See Attached**

#### **Strategies to Accomplish the Objective –**

- **Strategy 4.1.1** – Continue the Annual Case Audit program which objectively assesses the quality and thoroughness of investigative techniques to ensure that they meet and exceed industry standard
- **Strategy 4.1.2** – Institute a new online internal case management system created by OIT for the Commission in order to improve regular monitoring of case investigations to better aide the Executive Director in ensuring completion of investigations within 180 days on average from the date of initial complaint.

## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION - 113

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- **Strategy 4.1.3** – Hire a paralegal to provide administrative, legal and research support to investigative staff as a means of increasing investigative efficiency and increasing the chances that investigative findings will survive legal scrutiny.

**Objective 4.2** – Issue timely and well-written Memoranda, Subpoenas, Commission Orders and Decisions, that are able to withstand legal challenge on appeal.

**Trend and Analysis** – From FY2012 thru FY2014 the Commission heard on average one case per year. Two cases are currently scheduled for be heard in FY2015. In FY2014, the Commission dismissed approximately 85% of the cases initiated, none of those dismissals were appealed to Circuit Court. The Commission increased the number of Commissioners sworn and seated during the period finally reaching a full compliment of 13 throughout FY2014. This enabled it to handle more matters and assign more cases to be heard via Public Hearing and to attend more outreach events, than was possible in previous years. Additionally, reprogram of funds for FY2015 allowed for more intense focus and support by outside legal counsel contracted to train and advise the Commission on issuing legally supportable decisions and rulings, and to do so within at least 180 days. And, although one Commission decision issued in FY2014 has been appealed, it was remanded back for further findings in FY2015. That case is pending. Thus, the Commission has from FY2012-FY2015 met its target of having none of its decisions overturned on appeal.

### **Strategies to Accomplish the Objective –**

- **Strategy 4.2.1** – Upon the conclusion of a Public Hearing, the Commission will attempt to issue a well-reasoned and legally supportable decision within 180 days.
- **Strategy 4.2.2** – Mandate that Counsel to the Commission attend all meetings of the Commission, conduct an in-depth annual Commission training and assist in the research and writing of Commission decisions.
- **Strategy 4.2.3** – Provide at least 24 hours of training to Commissioners on proper trial management and procedure, decision making and consideration of evidence.

## **FY 2015 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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- Spearheaded a Regional Human Trafficking Task Forces Conference with US EEOC, 11 Human Trafficking Task Forces represented
- Completed and presented to the County Council the First Annual Human Trafficking Task Force Report
- Human Relations Commission received no legal challenges to its rulings and Commission Orders and did not have any cases overturned on Appeal

ADDENDUM 3

## Important Information

### THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION



#### DUTIES OF A COMMISSIONER

**DUTIES:** The Commission, along with its Executive Director, is the agency empowered to enforce the civil rights laws of Prince George's County. Primary duties of the 13 member commission are to: 1) conduct administrative hearings involving claims of unlawful discrimination, 2) Serve as the civil rights policy arm of county government; and 3) perform community outreach activities aimed providing information to citizens about cultural diversity and civil rights enforcement.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** Attendance at mandatory monthly commission meetings held on the 4th Monday of the each month at 6:00 pm. At the meetings, the Commission manages administrative details related to hearings, case closures, policy pronouncements, research and community outreach. Some preparation time prior to the meeting may be necessary depending on the agenda items established by the Executive Director and the Chair. Meetings typically last no more than 2 hours.

**HEARINGS:** Public Hearings are held at the discretion of the Commission, usually after a recommendation by the Executive Director, who is authorized to bring the charges of a civil rights violation. The hearings are scheduled at the pleasure of the Commission and are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Timely written decisions are required within 180 days after each public hearing.

**PANELS:** Commissioners hear cases in panels of three or four members, divided by subject area (Housing, Public Accommodations, Employment, Education, Real Estate, Lending, Law Enforcement Discrimination). A panel chair, assigned by the Commission Chairperson, presides over any hearings or related meetings. The Commission has the authority to award money damages, levy fines and issues cease and desist orders or other injunctive relief directed at penalizing or stopping discriminatory conduct.

**TERM:** Three years, depending on year of appointment.

**BENEFITS:** Although the position is non-stipend, funding is provided for travel and training in connection with civil rights conferences and meetings throughout the year. Reimbursement for certain expenses related to the performance of Commission duties is also permitted.



HOW TO BECOME A COMMISSIONER

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING AS A COMMISSIONER, PLEASE SEE "THE DUTIES OF A COMMISSIONER" PAGE IN THE "IMPORTANT INFORMATION" SECTION OF THE APPENDIX.**

Prince George's County Human Relations Commission  
2014 Case Audit Report

**Objective:** To review and grade cases closed from the time period of June 2, 2013 through June 1, 2014.

**Purpose:** To review closed cases to discover ways to improve the Agency's investigation process and case jacket presentation for the future.

**2014 Case Audit Conducted by:** Charles Floyd (Investigator), Jason Bush (Investigator) and Sandra Gibbs (Investigator).

**Average Overall Score: 9.25**

In June 2014, thirty (30) cases that were closed from June 2, 2013 through June 1, 2014, were randomly chosen from an available pool of seventy-one (71) cases. The case audit grading system of four (4) categories introduced in 2013 was continued for this 2014 case audit. The four (4) categories that the cases were scored on were: Completeness, Timeliness, Neatness, and Investigator Assessment. Scores were given on a scale of one (1) to ten (10), with one (1) being the lowest score and ten (10) being the highest possible score. After reviewing all thirty (30) case jackets and conducting interviews with each Investigator assigned to them, each case was scored and an overall average was calculated. The average overall score of the thirty (30) cases reviewed was 9.25 out of a possible 10. That is a vast improvement over the 8.38 score of 2013 when the four (4) category system was first established and the score of 8.32 in 2012.

**Completeness:** The Investigative team continues to move forward with the quality of their investigations and the completeness of the case jackets. The Investigators made sure each relevant case jacket had a Report of Investigation, which laid out their entire investigative process for anyone to pick up, read and understand how things went from beginning to end. The case jackets also had the proper documents and information required in each investigation based on the individual specific needs. Investigators have gotten better at labeling what is important and making sure that the reader knows where to find them without having to search through non-identified paperwork.

**Timeliness:** No reviewed case investigation took over four hundred (400) days to complete and the majority of the reviewed cases scored very high in the Timeliness category. Even though it is improving, timeliness is still a concern as the Commission strives to begin and end all investigations within the one hundred eighty (180) day period. The records show that the Investigators are continually improving in case closures by getting closer to achieving the one hundred eighty (180) day goal.

**Neatness:** Case jacket quality and appearance has greatly improved from the first case audit conducted in 2012 up until now. Out of the thirty (30) cases reviewed, none had damaged or loose paper hanging out and everything was hole-punched into its proper place. The table of contents for each case jacket was an easy read and the audit team had no problem finding any document they were looking for.

**Investigator Assessment:** The Investigators had no issues when discussing their cases and the work they put into their investigations. The Investigators were knowledgeable, confident and talked at length about the cases without once asking to see a case jacket. The Investigators remembered names, who they interviewed, important documents, if they had any issues and as well spoke on things that went beyond what the initial discrimination complaint was about. Investigators utilized their Investigative team members to help with their cases, receive advice or assistance during site visits and witness interviews to make sure that all areas were covered and provide additional insight. In addition, Investigators took advantage of investigative tools such as Lexis-Nexis and Maryland Judiciary Case Search to help them locate individuals and their past history.

In conclusion, the progress made since the last audit is very encouraging as it shows Investigators have taken the advice given in 2013 and applied it. It was much easier and less confusing in regards to scoring due to the high quality of the case jackets and the Investigators knowledge of their work. It is without question that the quality of the investigations, case jackets, and Investigator performance has improved significantly since the 2013 audit. It is encouraged that the Investigative team keep up the good work and strive to improve or maintain the high score of 9.25.

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING HAS MANY FACES.

Help Us Stop Human Sex and Labor Trafficking in Prince George's County.

VICTIMS CAN GET HELP.

humans **NOT** for sale



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE



Prince George's County **Click 311**  
easy. convenient. accessible.

National Human Trafficking  
Resource Center (NHTRC)  
1-888-373-7888  
[www.traffickinghuman.org](http://www.traffickinghuman.org)

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
**hrc**  
HUMAN RELATIONS  
COMMISSION  
Enhancing Diversity, Enriching Communities

**Human Trafficking** (hu·man traf·fick·ing) *n.* – organized criminal activity in which human beings are treated as possessions to be controlled and exploited (as by being forced into prostitution or involuntary labor).



**In Maryland Human Trafficking is:**

- The buying or selling of a human being for the purpose of sex or labor.
- The facilitating of buying or selling of a human being for the purpose or sex or labor.
- Receiving earnings as a result of a human being who is being trafficked for sex or labor.

**Membership:** Chaired by the Executive Director of the County’s Human Relations Commission (The County’s Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Agency), the membership of the PGCHTTF includes, but is not limited, to the following government and non-government agencies and organizations, as well as a host of individual community members and ex-officio organizations.

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Prince George’s County Commission for Women          | Prince George’s County Public Schools – Office of the CEO | Safe House of Hope  | Iota Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority |
| Prince George’s County Circuit Court                 | Prince George’s County State’s Attorney’s Office          | Turn Around   | Dimensions Health Systems                              |
| Prince George’s County Department of Family Services | Prince George’s County Department of Social Services      | The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force                               | Various faith-based organizations                      |
| Prince George’s County Fire Department               | The Prince George’s County Office of Law                  | The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services                            | University of Maryland – College Park                  |
| Prince George’s County Health Department             | Office of the Sheriff for Prince George’s County          | The Governor’s Task Force on Crime Control and Prevention               | City of Greenbelt Police                               |
| Prince George’s County Human Relations Commission    | Maryland National Capitol Park Police                     | The Office of the United States Attorney for the District of Maryland   | MNCPPC Park Police                                     |
| Prince George’s County Office of Homeland Security   | FAIR Girls  | The Federal Bureau of Investigation                                     | City of Bowie  |
| Prince George’s County Office of Community Relations | Courtney’s House  | The District of Columbia Human Trafficking Task Force                   | Municipal Police Chiefs Association                    |
| Prince George’s County Police Department             | Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault                 | U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Homeland Security Investigations |  |
|  | The Polaris Group   |   |  |
|  | The Samaritan Women                                       |   |  |

**Those that need help or see something suspicious can call 311 in Prince George’s County or the National Human Trafficking Hotline directly at 888-373-7888 when outside the County. If you wish to learn more about how you can help, dial 311 in Prince George’s County or call the Human Relations Commission at 301-883-6170. In case of emergency or immediate danger call 911.**

## Mythbusters – Human Trafficking Facts vs. Fiction

### FICTION:

Human Trafficking only occurs in other countries, not the United States.



### FACT:

Human Trafficking occurs in every city and every community.

### FICTION:

Human Trafficking victims are brought into the United States by strangers from foreign countries.



### FACT:

Human Trafficking victims are living right in Prince George's County and are trafficked by peers and/or family members.

### FICTION:

Human Trafficking only affects lower income and poorly educated communities.



### FACT:

Human Trafficking affects all communities regardless of income or educational levels.

### FICTION:

Females are the only victims of Human Trafficking.



### FACT:

Victims of Human Trafficking are both males, females, transgender and transsexual.

### FICTION:

Human Trafficking victims are mainly teenagers.



### FACT:

Victims of all ages are subjected to Human Trafficking.

### FICTION:

All "pimps" are men.



### FACT:

Women are often "pimps".

### FICTION:

Prostitutes are never victims of Human Trafficking.



### FACT:

Many prostitutes are victims of Human Trafficking.

### FICTION:

Recruiting for Human Trafficking only happens on city streets.



### FACT:

Recruiting for Human Trafficking can occur at any location, such as the internet, schools, shopping malls, parks, swimming pools, hotels, movie theaters, amusement parks, etc.

### FICTION:

It is only men who recruit victims of Human Trafficking.



### FACT:

Women, teens and children often are recruiters.

### FICTION:

Only someone who is homeless or from a single parent home is at risk for Human Trafficking.



### FACT:

All individuals, regardless of where they live or with whom they live with, can become victims of Human Trafficking.

### FICTION:

"Johns" are not criminals.



### FACT:

"Johns" engage in criminal activity when they purchase sex.



# PGCHTTF: Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force



**Mission:** The Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force (PGCHTTF) was formed by Council Resolution CR-74-2013 in July, 2013. The brainchild of Human Relations Commissioner Walakewon Blegay, the Task Force Resolution was developed and championed by Councilmember Karen Toles (Task Force Vice Chair). The Task Force was established in response to the Commission's 2013 Countywide Community Conference on Human Trafficking. The Task Force's focus is to study and combat the problem of Human Sex and Labor Trafficking in Prince George's County and, as a by-product, educate the public, identify and rescue victims and increase prosecution of traffickers.

**Goals:** Operating through six standing committees: First Responder Training; Law Enforcement and Public Safety; Legislative; Public Awareness and Outreach; Research and Advisory; and Victim Services; the four initial overall goals of the PGCHTTF Task Force are:

- to facilitate more coordinated anti-trafficking efforts in the County through protocol development, extensive community outreach, proactive investigations, law enforcement training efforts, intelligence sharing, forming partnerships between law enforcement and non-governmental organizations ("NGOs");
- to increase identification rates of human trafficking victims in the County, including domestic and transnational victims of both sex and labor trafficking;
- to aide in the establishment of a provider network to provide comprehensive services to victims of trafficking; and,
- to increase the prosecution of traffickers, criminally and where appropriate civilly.



Those that need help or see something suspicious can call 311 in Prince George's County or the National Human Trafficking Hotline directly at 888-373-7888 when outside the County. If you wish to learn more about how you can help, dial 311 in Prince George's County or call the Human Relations Commission at 301-883-6170. In case of emergency or immediate danger call 911.



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Rushern L. Baker, III  
County Executive

### **RESOLUTION OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION CONDEMNING THE ABDUCTION OF NIGERIAN SCHOOL GIRLS BY BOKO HARAM**

AT A MEETING OF THE COMMISSION AT ITS MONTHLY MEETING HELD AT PRINCE  
GEORGE'S COUNTY, ON MAY 19, 2014

WHEREAS, the Commission, as the County's Civil Rights Enforcement agency is granted authority pursuant to Division 12 of the Prince George's County Code to address issues of civil rights and human rights on behalf of the citizens of Prince George's County, does hereby find as follows:

WHEREAS, the terrorist group known as Boko Haram abducted more than 276 school girls in April and May of this year in Chibok and Warabe Nigeria; and

WHEREAS, the United States, through the United Nations, have strongly condemned the actions of Boko Haram and seeks to provide support and assistance to the government of Nigeria to recover the school girls; and

WHEREAS, a large population of citizens of Nigerian descent now call Prince George's County home; and

WHEREAS, the County has for many years established strong ties to the Country of Nigeria and its people; and

WHEREAS, the Commission recognizes, without equivocation, that every person regardless of gender, race, color, religion, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, *et al.*, MUST have the opportunity to pursue an education without fear of discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the Commission urges Prince George's County to stand within it and others in universal condemnation of the actions of Boko Haram and to BRING BACK OUR GIRLS; and


WHEREAS, the Commission through its on-going campaign against human trafficking as a member of the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force, seeks direct and concerted efforts to combat human trafficking nationally and internationally and calls upon our elected officials and citizens to work with it to end this scourge;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Prince George's County Human Relations Commission, that the Commission shall, stand with our local, state and federal government in expressing support for the people of Nigeria, and in strongly condemning the


14741 Governor Oden Bowie Dr., Suite L105  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
(301) 883-6170 FAX (301) 780-8244

abduction and trafficking of the Nigerian school girls by the terrorist group Boko Haram and urge the U.S. government to provide any and all resources to aide in their rescue; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission shall work with local citizens of Nigerian descent to keep pressure on the powers that be to save every girl taken, as soon as possible, and to return them to their families unharmed and sends its sincere condolences to the families affected by this tragedy with hopes for a speedy return of their children without harm.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nichele Vaughn, Chair

30 May 14  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest  
D. Michael Lyles, Esq., Executive Director

5/30/2014  
Date