



## COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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PATRICIA L. GATLING

*Commissioner and Chair*

Testimony of Clifford Mulqueen  
Before the Committee on Civil Rights  
November 22, 2010

Chairperson Rose, members of the Committee, good morning.

Thank you for with the opportunity to testify regarding Int. No. 396, which proposes amending the New York City Human Rights Law to describe the type of information the Commission would be required to provide in our annual report to the Mayor and the Council, as well as for publication in the City Record, pursuant to the Administrative Code of the City of New York, section 8-105 (10).

Let me begin by stating that the Commission has no problem with the proposal and already documents and reports most of the information required under the amendment, specifically, the number and type of complaints filed, the type of determinations and resolutions reached, settlements and their dollar value. We also report the amount of fines collected for the city and the number of Decisions and Orders. In addition, as the proposed amendment would require, the Commission annually reports the efforts of the Community Relations Bureau, detailing our various programs and presentations, including the number of presentations conducted and the number of individuals reached. With minimal adjustments, the Commission will be able to quickly meet the amendment's requirements as they relate to educational outreach and case tracking.

However, another part of the Intro's requirements pose electronic record management issues that the Commission is currently in the process of addressing. I refer to the requested breakdown of information regarding all inquiries from the public.

The Commission receives approximately 6,000 inquiries regarding discrimination per year, including telephone calls, letters and e-mails directly to the Commission, and those

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forwarded from 311 or other agencies. The vast majority of these inquiries, approximately 5,000 a year, are telephone calls. All these inquiries from the public are logged and reviewed with a supervisor and the documentation relating to the inquiries are reviewed by the Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Bureau on a monthly basis.

If the substance of the inquiry even vaguely appears to state a claim of discrimination, the individual is directed to the Law Enforcement Bureau for an Intake interview. The Commission does approximately 1,600 Intake interviews per year and it is this interview that triggers an entry into our current case tracking system database. That means that a large number of interactions between the Commission and the public are not entered into an electronic database capable of the breakout reporting required by this amendment. We do have records of each interaction between the Commission and the public; however, those are in the form of simple databases with only summary capacity; letters, e-mails or other forms that document and explain the actions taken by the Commission. Since these records were designed for administrative, rather than reporting functions, generating reports describing all inquiries would have to be done manually.

The Commission has long realized the informational and reporting deficiencies that exist with our current case tracking system; one which we inherited from previous administrations. The software is so outdated that the company that created it no longer supports it, and there are only three companies (one in Connecticut, one in New Jersey and one in Pennsylvania) with the necessary expertise to assist when problems occur. We have explored several other systems available on the market, both individually and as part of a group of city agencies. However, the logistics of migrating years worth of data into the new system and the expense of modifying these "off the shelf" software products for our needs have made these systems financially prohibitive.

In 2004, our Community Relations Bureau began using software, created specifically for the bureau, which chronicled its activities and enabled the Commission to more easily measure, describe and report on the impact of those activities. By mid 2005, the Community Relations Bureau went "paperless" and all of its activities were entered directly into a database.

The Commission envisions a time when the Law Enforcement Bureau can function in much the same way. We began working with programmers last summer to develop upgraded software for our Law Enforcement Bureau that will include a traditional case tracking model and other features that capture information about our other activities, including the status of all inquiries. When fully operational, in the summer of 2011, this new database will be capable of reporting on every interaction the Law Enforcement Bureau has with the public, enabling full compliance with the requirements of this proposed amendment.

Thank you.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 396 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: LEE HUDSON

Address: 40 PECTOR ST

I represent: NYC COM ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Address: ABOVE

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: CARLOS VALEZ

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I represent: THE NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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Name: CHIFF UNLOVER DEP COM

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I represent: NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆