

Commission on Human Rights

Kentucky Human Rights Commission executive director urges KY Public Protection and Transportation cabinets to increase women and minority employment and membership

Press Release Date: Friday, September 28, 2012

Contact Information: Victoria Stephens
502.641.0760-Mobile
1.800.292.5566-Commission Headquarters

Sept. 28, 2012 – Louisville, KY – In two open letters, one to Robert Vance, secretary of the Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet, and one to Michael Hancock, secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights recently asked the two leaders to increase their numbers of female and minority members in their respective cabinets' workforces, boards, councils and committees.

Such increases are necessary to help Kentucky government meet its female and minority hiring and membership goals, the letters said.

"These have been set in order to help the state correctly represent the percentages of women and minority constituents within a diverse state," says John J. Johnson, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

Since 2004, the state government's hiring goals for women has been 52.42 percent and for minorities 10 percent.

Johnson expressed concern to secretaries Vance and Hancock about the absence of minority members on their respective cabinet boards, councils and committees and the cabinets' low numbers of female and minority employees.

To both cabinet heads Executive Director Johnson offered the support and assistance of the state Human Rights Commission toward efforts to achieve greater diversity representation in the Public Protection Cabinet and Transportation Cabinet workforces and memberships.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights noted that in the Public Protection Cabinet's 2012 Title VI report submitted to the commission for fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012), no minority representation was noted on the Kentucky Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Rules, the Manufactured Home Certification and Licensure Board or the Board of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Contractors. Secondly, the Public Protection Cabinet's listings of women and minority employees were incomplete, making it difficult for the commission to

correctly determine the cabinet's numbers of these employees. The commission asked for a resubmission of this data with the necessary clarifications.

Regarding the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Title VI report to the commission, Executive Director Johnson noted to Secretary Hancock that five of the Transportation Cabinet's seven committees had no minority representation, particularly the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Certification Committee, which has no minority or female representation. The Kentucky Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program reaches out to businesses that have achieved DBE status with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) and also helps pre-certified companies achieve such status. Kentucky is rich with small, minority- and women-owned businesses that may have opportunities to work on projects when they receive the DBE status from this committee. The Kentucky DBE Program presents the case for preparation to all DBE firms, offering support and a wide range of resources designed to help them become more competitive.

The letter to the Transportation Cabinet secretary said: "The [Kentucky Human Rights] Commission is particularly concerned that there is no minority representation on any of the 12 District Office Property Loss Control committees. Also, of the additional 12 committees listed in the cabinet's report, only eight have any minority representation. Finally, of the 4,706 employees [of the Transportation Cabinet], only 294 are minorities, less than seven percent."

At its monthly meeting on Sept. 20, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights Board of Commissioners showed support for the executive director's letters to the Public Protection Cabinet and the Transportation Cabinet asking for an increase in female and minority representation, in keeping with Kentucky's employment goals.

As the state government agency that enforces the Kentucky Civil Rights Act, KRS Chapter 344, the state Human Rights Commission receives Title VI reports from state cabinets, commissions and agencies. The reports detail the numbers of minority and female employees and minorities on boards, councils and committees. The commission has now received Title VI reports covering the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 from state entities.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government authority that enforces the Kentucky Civil Rights Act. As an affiliate of federal government entities such as the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights enforces federal civil rights laws such as the Federal Civil Rights Act, the Federal Fair Housing Act, the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

The Kentucky Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, public accommodations, and financial transactions. Protected classes include race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, age (40 years-old and over in employment), tobacco-smoking status in employment, and familial status, which protects in the area of housing pregnant women and families with children under 18 years-old. It is illegal to retaliate against any person who has made a discrimination complaint to the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

For help with discrimination or to ask for free literature about civil rights, contact the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights at 1.800.292.5566. Or, visit the website at www.kchr.ky.gov. From there, visit the commission Facebook and Twitter pages for news and announcements regarding protected classes and commission activities.