



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

January 20th, 2023

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Commission Meeting
Olympia, Thurston County, WA

The Washington State LGBTQ Commission envisions a state where every lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, and intersex Washingtonian of any age feels safe, supported, and empowered.

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Below is a summary of the activities of the Commission staff from mid-November 2023 through mid-January 2023, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: During the previous months, the staff of the Commission worked in collaboration with several coalitions and community groups who were working on their legislative priorities. Both Tracey and I met separately and as a team, with leaders from different groups that were preparing draft bills which address issues that can have an effect in our LGBTQ communities.

In addition to the outreach and meetings with community groups, we also worked on internal personnel matters. With changes to HR policies, the position of "Program Manager" currently qualifies for overtime payment. I worked with our HR consultant and with Tracey to find the best way to process her hours and to ensure she gets paid accordingly.

The staff also met with two different queer-owned consulting firms to get quotes for the facilitation of the strategic planning meeting in January.

Finally, for the past few months, Tracey has been convening with her colleagues from the ethnic and women's commissions to share ideas and support each other's work.

Outreach:

The Commission did not host any public events during the previous months.

Community and official events attended and relationship with grassroots groups:

- **United Way of Pierce County:** participated of "From Poverty to Possibility" event where Dr. K. Johnson from the Office of Equity, was the keynote speaker. The event also explored the outcomes of a pilot program for guaranteed income in the city of Tacoma, and the

- statewide guaranteed income program being developed by the Poverty Reduction Workgroup.
- **Disability Rights Washington:** continued working with partner agency to expand protections for LGBTQ people in prison.
 - **Oasis Youth Center:** participated as a workshop leader at their annual leadership retreat, sharing strategies for legislative advocacy.
 - **MPOWERment Olympia:** was the speaker for their AIDS Day event on December 1st.
 - **Rainbow Center & Oasis Youth Center:** participated of a remembrance vigil for the community to honor those murdered at a gay club in Colorado.
 - **Antidefamation League:** participated of their annual meeting with stakeholders to share about legislative priorities and seek feedback from community organizations.
 - **Transgender American Veterans Association:** met with Executive Director, Cassandra Williams, to talk about their work and brainstorm about collaboration.
 - **University of Puget Sound Gender & Queer Studies Program:** met with faculty specialized on Queer Studies to get feedback on budget proposal for comprehensive LGBTQ survey.
 - **Maryland & Pennsylvania LGBTQ Commissions:** met with Jeremy Browning, Director of the MD LGBTQ Commission, and Henry Sias, Commissioner with the PA LGBTQ Commission, to connect all three statewide Commissions, and start brainstorming for a national gathering of LGBTQ government groups.
 - **Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network:** have continued to work with the network on legislation to support survivors of sex trafficking.

2. ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATION

Government Agencies

The Commission has the mandate to engage government agencies and offer support and feedback on issues related to LGBTQ inclusion. Currently, I have met or being involved in work with the following agencies to discuss matters related to LGBTQ inclusion:

- **Department of Licensing:** met with Director T. Berntsen to follow up on previous support regarding LGBTQ staff needs at the agency.
- **Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance:** continue engaging the agency regarding their small business outreach programs.
- **State Human Resources Office:** continue working with RAIN and State HR to review the definition of family and expand it to include diverse families beyond the traditional nuclear, next of kin, definition.
- **Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities:** offered feedback and comments to rulemaking process as well as draft legislation to update their charter to expand on equity issues.
- **Commission on Hispanic Affairs:** met with Director M. Sigüenza to strengthen relationship between agencies and share common goals. We currently have monthly meetings scheduled to offer support and strategize together on intersectional issues.
- **Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises:** met with recently-appointed Director L. Fernandes to share about our agency and to discuss the next steps related to LGBTQ business certification.
- **Washington State Patrol:** continued to work with staff from WSP on outreach, hiring, and retention of diverse communities for the agency.
- **US Department of Health & Human Services:** have continued strengthening these relationships. Recently received an invitation to be one of the speakers for the national conference on human services to be held in Maryland in March, 2023.
- **Washington Resiliency Workgroup:** participated of the last meeting of the group where the draft legislative proposals were presented. The work of this group will continue in different ways throughout the coming years.
- **Office of Equity:** participated of the first Governor's Equity Summit held in Tacoma. Continue collaborating with the Office and Commissions to expand access to services with an equity lens.
- **Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee:** I have been part of the committee's group of stakeholders who offer input, feedback, and help plan questions to assess the implementation of legislation and its impact on minoritized communities.
- **Health and Human Services Sex and Gender Coalition:** an interagency workgroup to address the need to update forms, applications, and

- systems to best record and get information on people's gender identity in way that would both provide them options to self-identify and get services that only recognize the gender binary. I participate of meeting with the Coalition every other week.
- **Office of Financial Management:** OFM hosts monthly meetings with the executive sponsors for the state's business resource groups and I have attended all meetings this year. I also met with staff from OFM to discuss budget provisos and requests.
 - **Minority Commissions – Commission on African American Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, and Women's Commission:** participated of regular calls with colleagues to support cross-agency work. Additionally, I have met with the leads of these agencies regularly to ask for feedback, offer support, or work on specific projects.
 - **Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN):** as their Executive Sponsor, I meet with the leadership team monthly for three hours to go over plans, offer support, listen to concerns, help develop programs, and serve as an advocate for the group with the Governor's Office and OFM.
 - **Governor's Policy Office:** continue meeting with representatives from the policy office to strategize on policy ideas to support LGBTQ people around the state. RaShelle Davis, our previous contact with this office, has moved on to a different position. As of January 2023, our new policy advisor is Dontae Payne. I have a scheduled meeting with him in the coming weeks to go over our legislative priorities and share our policy work thus far.

Other – Policy and Budget Update

The Commission's budget proposals were accepted and included in Governor Inslee's budget. It was exciting to find our budget request as part of the Governor's highlights in his budget proposal. The Governor included a \$982,000 appropriation for the next biennium to support our initiatives. The text reads: "LGBTQ support Engaging the LGBTQ community is paramount to understanding people's health and economic disparities, as well as the demographic and geographic distribution of Washington's LGBTQ community. This funding will give the Washington State LGBTQ Commission the ability to procure a contractor so

that the commission can complete a comprehensive survey of the state. This will also fund a staff to create an ongoing statewide LGBTQ Youth Advisory Council. The recommendation to create a council came from a recent LGBTQ Roundtable discussion with the governor, various 13-18-year-olds, and their parents. This effort will be dedicated and focused on young LGBTQ Washingtonians' issues, needs and resources." ([Found on page 99 here.](#))

3. COMMISSION EVENTS CALENDAR

Public meetings: The Commission will be meeting on the following dates in 2023:

- Friday, March 17th – Spokane County
- Friday, May 19th – Thurston County
- Friday, July 21st – Walla Walla County
- Friday, September 15th – Thurston County
- Friday, November 17th – Skagit County

Other events:

- Infertility Treatment Bill Townhall – Monday, January 30th, 6-7:30 pm at Commission Office, Olympia
- LGBTQ Veterans Townhall – Thursday, February 23rd, 2-3:30 pm, virtual