



WASHINGTON STATE
LGBTQ
COMMISSION

Executive Director's Report

March 17th, 2023

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Commission Meeting
Spokane, Spokane 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-January through mid-March 2023, including legislative advocacy and community outreach.

1. STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ACTIVITIES

Staff: This last February I had the chance to attend the Creating Change Conference in San Francisco. Commissioners Steven Sawyer and Agaiotupu Viena also participated of the conference, as well as a good representation of Washington LGBTQ people and allies. During the conference I had the chance to participate of workshops on a diverse number of themes, and I participated of the daylong Latinx Institute. This was a great experience, and I was able to connect with LGBTQ folk doing great work throughout the country.

I have also worked on several fiscal notes requested by the Legislature, on bills that name the LGBTQ Commission. I have also met with or sent letters to legislators stating our position on several bills.

Commissioner Coleman connected with student families in the La Center School District in Clark County who are experiencing anti-LGBTQ policies in their school district. In addition to providing support and guidance, Commissioner Coleman testified at a recent public meeting of a school board on behalf of the Commission. They also researched and compiled a list of anti-LGBTQ policies introduced or adopted by different school boards throughout the County. In Pierce County, Commissioner Kelly-Barroga testified at a public meeting of the Puyallup School District school board on behalf of the Commission. The staff of the Commission is monitoring both situations and consulting with the Governor's policy advisors to know what the next steps should be. In addition to these two emerging issues affecting students, a constituent reached out regarding anti-lesbian discrimination against her in her school in the Tacoma School District.

Finally, we received a message from a constituent who is currently representing a family of a young transgender person who was denied health care coverage from their insurance. I am working with the constituent and with the policy advisors to determine what are the next steps, as this is clearly against the current laws and regulations in the state.

Outreach:

- **LGBTQ Veterans Panel Video:** in collaboration with the WA Department of Veterans Affairs and their LGBTQ+ Veterans Outreach Coordinator, Robin Lang, the Commission recorded a panel conversation on the challenges of LGBTQ Veterans, and the resources available to them in WA. Commissioner Dustin Best was a panelist for this recording, and he joined Pat McIntyre, Dontae Payne, and Bridget Reposa from the VA-Seattle. The recording of the video can be [accessed through this link](#).
- **Protects Tran Kids Rally:** helped coordinate and spoke at rally organized by local Pierce County activist in support of transgender and gender expansive children and youth on February 26th.
- **Love = Equally:** the Office of the Secretary of State hosted the 10th anniversary celebration of marriage equality in Washington on February 14th. Among the speakers for the celebration were former Gov. Chris Gregoire, Gov. Inslee, Secretary Hobbs, Speaker Jenkins, Senator Pedersen, and me.

Community and official events attended and relationship with grassroots groups:

- **MultiCare institute for Research and Innovation:** met with Deana Williams, researcher with MultiCare, to discuss her work and partnership in LGBTQ health research.
- **Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program:** delivered keynote speech at the first day of trainings for CWTAP. This conference brings Social Work students from UW-Seattle, UW-Tacoma and Eastern, faculty, and DCYF staff working on child welfare for a weekend of trainings and plenary sessions.
- **Public Sector Network:** met with representatives of PSN – an international consulting firm working to improve government innovation initiatives – to discuss participation in their next WA State Innovation Conference. Also, accepted invitation to be part of their international advisory board, which includes two other WA state colleagues.
- **Boys & Girls Club:** participated of their Pierce County chapter's fundraiser and youth awards ceremony. Connected with leadership to

- start conversations about brainstorming for new name for their organization to make it more inclusive of gender expansive youth.
- **Legal Voice:** Tracey and I met with new staff from Legal Voice to continue partnership and share legislative priorities and strategies.
 - **QLaw Foundation:** have participated of regular legislative advocacy meetings coordinated by QLaw Foundation.
 - **Lavender Rights Project:** have communicated with leadership of LRP to brainstorm on how to expand and strengthen protections for transgender and gender expansive people who might be seeking refuge in WA after anti-trans legislation in their states.
 - **Rainbow Center:** participated of town hall interviews for Executive Director finalists, and attended the farewell event for outgoing ED.
 - **University of Puget Sound Gender & Queer Studies Program:** received notification of undergraduate student interested in internship with the Commission. Currently coordinating to interview student and figure out tasks and work timeline.
 - **Washington State Labor Council:** have communicated with staff at WSLC to discuss strategies to move bill on fertility treatment forward.

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:

- **Office of Financial Management:** I have met with staff of OFM for different things such as:
 - **State HR:** discussion on expanding the definition of family for employee time off on family leave
 - **Budget Office:** started meeting regularly with state CFO and staff to discuss operating budget for the Commission
 - **OFM Human Resources:** continued meetings with HR consultant to discuss personnel compensation changes and staff evaluations

- **Department of Social and Health Services:** reviewed and offered feedback and recommendations to curricula for caretakers training.
- **Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities:** continued to engage the council, Tracey attended the last council meeting on behalf of the Commission.
- **Commission on Hispanic Affairs:** regular check-in meetings with Director Sigüenza.
- **Department of Enterprise Services:** participated of a leadership panel for statewide leadership training program for public employees.
- **Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises:** continued conversations with leadership on the need to expand LGBTQ certification for small businesses.
- **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:** finished participation on coordinating committee for the National Convening on Building an Inclusive Human Services System. I will be participating on a panel discussion at the conference in Maryland later in March. Information and registration for the (free and hybrid) convening [can be found through this link](#).
- **Office of Equity:** continue meeting regularly with leadership and staff from the office.
- **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. Meet regularly with our policy advisor, Dontae Payne, and recently met with Maddie Thompson, policy advisor for education, to discuss anti-LGBTQ policies in school districts.

Other – Policy and Budget Update

At the time of this report, we have not heard any updates on our budget requests. However, during my conversations with the state CFO, she informed me that her office has been working on submitting a budget request that reflects increases in operating budgets for the Commissions and other Governor’s Office affiliated organizations. This increase will be in addition to the budget request we presented.

3. COMMISSION EVENTS CALENDAR

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

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